

CURRENT  
BRITISH  
THOUGHT

No. 1

*With an introduction by* IVOR BROWN

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## INTRODUCTION

*by* IVOR BROWN

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THE first whole year of peace in Great Britain promised exciting changes, swift achievements, and drastic mutations of mood and opinion. Yet, when a Briton looks back on the events of 1946, the year seems curiously static. The variations of social temper and philosophy were small. The nation, for example, having made up its mind in 1945 to give Labour its political chance, did not in any way abandon that resolve. It is customary for Governments to lose the by-elections when Parliamentary seats fall vacant, because it is obviously more easy to attack an Administration for its blunders and misfortunes than to defend it for its virtues and successes. But since the General Election the Labour Government has had to face twenty-six such tests and did not fail in a single one of them. Majorities sometimes sagged: that was inevitable. But they did not vanish: that was strange and certainly unexpected.

This occurrence was typical of a year in which the social scene altered far less than was expected. Material reconstruction was disappointingly slow and the building industry was so busy with repairing bomb damage that it could not get on to new construction. Export trade did climb back from its war-time 'low' to 100 per cent of 1938, but serious people knew perfectly well that 175 per cent of that old level is necessary if Britain is to recover its old balance of markets, pay its way, and establish once more a tolerable standard of living.

Serious people. That phrase raises an important point. There seems to be in Britain a considerable cleavage in the degree of common instruction about economic matters. On the one hand is a large and sadly irresponsible section of the workers who keep up a series of unofficial strikes, acting against the orders of their unions, and betraying a deplorable ignorance of Britain's grievous

economic position. These men and women evidently did not realise that Britain's adverse balance of payments was still running at 300,000,000 pounds a year and that the nation's internal Budget has still to be balanced. Hence their carefree attitude, absenteeism from factories and workshops, and their readiness to impede the industrial machine by foolish stoppages.

On the other hand, there never was a time when the student class took life more earnestly or showed greater industry in preparing for their exams and for life itself. Naturally, with the Universities more or less closed to young men since 1939, there was tremendous pressure on all academic resources and all collegiate accommodations, both of which were strained to the uttermost in order to accommodate as many ex-Service men and women as possible. In some Oxford Colleges, two men had to use the room space hitherto allotted to one and huts were built in the quadrangle to find living room for more. While visiting Oxford during the latter part of 1946 I had repeated assurances from the heads of Colleges and other educational authorities that the undergraduate was in no mood of reckless 'whoopie' after his release from the long, hard strains and austerities of Service life and of battle-zone conditions. He was intensely eager to make up for lost time and to read all he was told. That was not always easy, whatever his zeal and good-will, for the scarcity of books was very great in many subjects owing to the paper shortage and consequent inability to reprint text-books. Some tutors even lamented the normal lack of turbulence in youth and felt that docile application to appointed tasks was being carried too far! They were wholly unused to the type of student who, on being advised to read ten books on a subject, did actually apply himself to read them all. In earlier years the tutor would have been surprised if one were read!

It was significant too that in both Oxford and Cambridge Unions—that is, the chief clubs with debating societies in each University—the majority, as shown by votes taken after discussions, was Conservative. Aforetime one did expect Labour victories in the Unions, but the ex-service undergraduate was thinking otherwise. The nation as a whole, as I said, did not swerve from the Leftward course adopted at the General Election, but serious people knew and appreciated the economic and industrial

facts and had intelligence enough to foresee the grievous calamity bound to ensue unless vast improvement were made in production and in the discipline necessary to achieve it. The Conservative votes in Oxford and Cambridge were indicative of these alarms. And when the Scottish Universities had a chance to replace Sir John Boyd Orr in Parliament (since Sir John preferred to devote the whole of his time and energy to the World Food Organisation), he was succeeded by Walter Elliot, a prominent and brilliant Conservative of the Central, not reactionary type. Elliot received an overwhelming majority although his predecessor had sat, not as a Conservative, but as an Independent. When I congratulated Elliot on his victory, he expressed his belief that the educated people were really well aware of the stern implications of the economic facts and figures, whereas far too many others were living in a vague belief that under a Labour Government all was bound to be well and work, relentless work, was an unpleasantness not yet to be seriously considered.

The ability of publishers to sell as many copies as they could issue of important works on history, economics and philosophy was further testimony to this seriousness of purpose among the reading classes. Books like Sir G. M. Trevelyan's *English Social History* continually sold out as soon as printed, despite the price of five dollars, which is a high price for the British student. Bertrand Russell's gigantic *History of Western Philosophy*, priced also at five dollars, disappeared from the shelves and counters at once and students had to wait for a reprinting. The British Broadcasting Corporation began in the latter end of the year its Third Programme, an addition on ambitiously intellectual and cultural lines to the two general programmes known as Home and Light. This 'Third' offered classics of the stage and of music at full length, however long, as well as new features and discussions which would in old days have been dismissed as impossibly abstruse or fit for wiseacres only. If an item needed much time and care to be its true self, time and care were freely allowed. There was no cutting, no popularising, no playing down. And the result was unexpectedly popular. The market for the severe exceeded all expectations.

According to Listener Research, which gathers information on public reactions to radio, more than 10 per cent stood up to the

stiff mental and aesthetic challenge of 'Third Programme.' If we may assume in Great Britain 25,000,000 potential listeners of one kind or age group and another, this means that 2,500,000 are at least in occasional contact with the most difficult 'menu for minds' so far offered. The British Broadcasting Corporation had professed its readiness to continue supplying the 'Third' even if it turned out to be serving and satisfying only a chosen few. These might have been a mere handful by the Corporation's own reckoning and so there was natural satisfaction when the number of Third Programme addicts rose so high. Even such features as Greek tragedy (of course in English) appear to have been well received. All of which goes to confirm the seriousness of purpose in a considerable minority of the British people in these testing years. Records of study, reading, and listening all agree in confirming this judgment.

This seriousness of the new Britain is mainly secular. There have been no signs of religious revival. 'The Church is fighting a losing battle,' wrote Canon W. H. Elliott, a popular journalist as well as preacher, in the beginning of 1947. 'On Sunday after Sunday every cinema in the great cities is packed, often with queues of people a hundred yards long outside them, waiting for admission. That means something like 1500 a time, possibly twice in one evening. The churches on an average, with some remarkable exceptions, show congregations ranging from 55 to 60! In the churches too the majority of people are on the wrong side of forty.'

Canon Elliott was not denouncing the cinema crowds. They are of all sorts and include many serious young people. The abstention is not from the labour of thinking or from the discipline of ethics, but from certain forms of religious doctrine or ceremonial which have lost their appeal. This picture of full cinemas and empty churches does not in the least contradict that other picture of the crowded Universities and of the devoted and industrious student. It is notable that any kind of conference on social issues has always drawn large attendance since the war and that the organised Youth Groups, though their members may be absentees from the pew in church or chapel, are insatiable in discussing the ends and purposes of life and the means and methods of attaining them.



This conclusion was further borne out during 1946 by the sales of reading matter. I use that rather ugly phrase 'reading matter' because I wish to include journals as well as books. The rising sales of newspapers and magazines were certainly not limited to those of the most obviously popular appeal. Such a daily paper, for example as the *Manchester Guardian* achieved the highest circulation of its career and had figures double those of pre-war days, while the sixpenny weekly reviews also reached sales hitherto quite undreamed of by their proprietors and editors. Authors had once more to complain that even with an increased paper ration, their books seemed to be always out of print, such was the briskness of demand.

This eagerness for reading applied equally to the classic and the modern. The better the writing, the more the readers. Owing to scarcity of paper and slowness of printing and binding, many of the great works of English literature remained largely unprocurable, the emerging copies being immediately snapped up. The demand was incessant, especially for such novelists as Jane Austen and Anthony Trollope. One stimulant of this demand for the traditional novels of renown was the habit of broadcasting them in radio form. This kind of dramatisation on the air was keenly listened to and the listeners then sought in their myriads to try to get the original book—or others by the same author or in the same category. At any rate, it is fair to say that standards of reading, whether in fiction or in the study of social and scientific questions, remained high. Trash did, of course, get printed, but no promoter of such printing had the excuse that only by printing trash could he keep his business alive.

It astonished many foreign observers that British opinion in 1946 seemed to be so little stirred by the discovery and implications of atomic power. Certainly there was much less concern about this tremendous topic than there was in America. But the reason for this was not stupidity or lack of imagination or deficiency of social conscience. The average Briton felt that America was ahead, possibly far ahead, in the development of atomic energy and in possession of the necessary techniques and installations. British science might have contributed much in research and efforts were being made to get to work on peaceful usage of nuclear fission here, but since the main production centre was

still far away, people thought that the responsibility must rest, inevitably, with the producers.

It was only natural that the British should feel a sense of remoteness and therefore of impotence in the matter. They hoped that the Baruch Plan would be accepted by Russia as well as by the other Powers and that mankind would realise its peril and seek its salvation in time. They hoped—but what more could they do but go on with their immediate tasks and look to the West, where UNO as well as the atomic energy plants was established? In the West they looked for a settlement that would remove this dreadful threat to the destiny of mankind. There was plentiful discussion of the topic by scientists and student groups. But the general public seemed to agree that the new magic was, for good or ill, outside its grasp. It could only long for the best.

At the head of the literary world still stands, little touched by time considering his ninety years, the Anglo-Irish master Bernard Shaw. The contribution to this volume from his hand shows how skilful his use of the pen can still be. The critique in question was written rapidly in kindly response to my own suggestion that, as he was the only surviving playgoer of the eighteen-sixties and seventies, he was obviously the right reviewer for a book on the drama of that period. Back came the review, as prompt as powerful, in no time at all. Such is Shaw at ninety. His younger colleague in what may be called the Letters of the Left, H. G. Wells, died after a long illness and his passing was the occasion for a striking tribute from his fellow authors of all ages and opinions. All testified to the extraordinary influence he had exercised and to his brilliant work in the liberation of the British young in the early years of this century.

The death of Wells naturally left one wondering where are the successors? The young writers, of course, have had their careers cruelly interrupted by the calls of war and it is early to deplore any lack of talent. Supposing Wells had had to waste six years of his own richly creative and fertile youth. What a difference it would have made to his career! Thirty years ago it was Radicalism (or Socialism) that dominated writing, especially writing on moral and social topics. Now it seems likely that a reaction will set in and that the young idea in Great Britain will become more interested in preserving tradition and less devoted to uprooting it.

It is significant that writers of the Left are now taking a lively part in the assault on Communism. Arthur Koestler, author of *The Yogi and the Commissar*, and George Orwell, author of *Animal Farm*, which had so great a success in America, are both men of early middle age who have voiced in these books the disillusion of their kind. They had looked so eagerly to Russia—and a Communist on the rebound is apt to be a very severe critic of the men and the system which he once idealised. Certainly it can be said that Communism makes no increasing appeal to the British young, many of whom feel that it has let them down. At the same time it is strongly and widely insisted by this school that Russian Communism must be left to work out its own destiny and not continually abused and threatened.

On the Conservative side, too, there is a notable liveliness in the world of letters and ideas. In pure letters and in poetry the Anglo Catholic group, who are strongly represented in the anonymous columns of *The Times Literary Supplement*, are numerous and vocal in defence of traditional standards in art, morals, and religion. Headed by T. S. Eliot, and with the sympathetic brain and hand of Charles Morgan on their side, they sustain a strong defensive action against the anarchists of arts and ethics who ridicule the past and respect no rules or discipline, being equally contemptuous of rhyme in poetry and of reason in all things. Another Catholic Conservative who has scored a considerable success was Christopher Sykes, whose *Four Studies in Loyalty* was much enjoyed and highly praised alike for its irony in treatment of folly and its devotion in respect of courage. Sykes is in the same camp as Evelyn Waugh, a camp which is well armed for any future campaigns against the Rationalist and the Radical. This resurgence of Conservatism, not of a purely political order but representing respect for tradition in all departments of life, is an interesting parallel to the new political Conservatism of the Universities, to which allusion has already been made.

The death of Lord Keynes deprived Great Britain of one of its most remarkable men and his friends of a rare spirit and an amazing mind. He had all the gifts, being a connoisseur of the arts as well as a great economist. One of the last achievements of his life was to secure a Royal Charter and therefore a safely established position for the Arts Council of Great Britain. This had

begun in a humble and private way at the beginning of the war, thanks to a fine benefaction from the Pilgrim Trustees who administer the ample funds so generously left by an American, Edward Harkness, for the benefit of British causes. The idea was to assist the arts and artists during the hard times of the war and to bring to art-starved industrial areas plays, music, paintings, and so on, of a high standard. The reception was so warm and the work so well done that the Government took over the idea and created an Arts Council to carry on this dispersal of 'the best for the few.' The artistic flair and administrative genius of Lord Keynes were invaluable in the creation of the Council and the direction of its work.

The Council's successful emergence typified much that was happening in the social life of the country. One product of the long years of 'black-out,' of rationed and shoddy clothing, of dust and rubble in the bombed towns, and of joyless living in general was an intense feeling of colour starvation. The result was a huge public appetite for anything of strong appeal to the senses. Orchestral music, for example, which may be said to offer the brave colour of sound, was never more popular. Ballet, which had once been the fancy of a chosen few, suddenly became popular on a large scale because of the speed and beauty of its movement, its colour and pattern, its richness of musical accompaniment. For the arts of escape—escape into harmony from a harsh and jarring world, escape into colour from a dull and drab one—there was continual support. Costume plays of all kinds were in great demand. The sight of old finery seemed somehow to relieve the colour-hunger of the time, and the actors who relied upon Shakespeare were rarely at fault. The trouble was to find enough stages on which to set the plays, for the housing shortage affected theatres and concert halls for the artists as well as houses for the people.

There, then, is the general picture of a people endeavouring, amidst great difficulties, to find its new way and purpose in conformity with changing times. Having swerved away from traditional policies, it is now reconsidering that action. The democracy, as a whole, has certainly stood by its decision of July, 1945. But the student class is obviously less confident in the new régime. Furthermore, the trend of thought and creed among the intellec-

tuals shows a growing loyalty to the humanism of the past and to the nation's cultural inheritance. Anarchy and absurdity still have their fling in painting and poetry, as in the industrial ferments of the time, but an unbiased observer must now begin to feel that there is less future for Futurism and little regard among people who think at all for all the cloudy and pretentious -isms of the cliques. Much instruction of economic affairs is needed among the workers by hand. The workers by brain are closer to the financial realities and have become increasingly aware that the British way and purpose and the design for free and happy living are wholly impossible on a basis of frivolous idleness and of fractious bickering in the workaday life of the nation.

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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The present volume is the second book of a series forming part of a more comprehensive publishing plan. *American Thought 1947* was published a short while ago, while *Latin American Thought 1947* is still in preparation. In essence this publishing plan is based on the desirability of an international exchange of important current world thought, making available to readers a representative synthesis of what has been thought on vitally important aspects of life and culture in the various areas considered and in the one-year periods under review.

It was not deemed opportune, in this first year, to publish books of a like nature and scope on Continental Europe, on the Islamic World, the Far East, the Soviet World or other cultural entities, although it is hoped to expand in that direction in succeeding years, making available to American readers the thoughts, say, of a poet in Teheran, a psychologist in Madras or a sage in Stockholm.

It may prove of interest to readers to know how the selections from the vast amount of material were made.

Teams of readers were organized in London, New York and Buenos Aires. In London the readers were headed by Miss Marjorie K. F. Dickson, who is connected with the United States Information Services in London in the capacity of Associate Editor. In New York readers were headed by Dr. R. S. Nathan, who during the war edited magazines in French, Italian, German, Dutch and Danish for the United States government and who is still concerned with periodicals in the occupied areas of Europe and the Far East. In Buenos Aires readers were directed by Dr. Hector Quesada Zapiola, who is a member of the Argentine Judicial branch.

Preliminary round-table discussions were held in these capitals

based on the Publisher's Editorial Directive. Extracts from this Directive to readers for the American book are given below. The same Directive, as applied to Britain, was used in the case of the present volume.

The idea, in essence, is to present a yearly survey of American thought and achievement in the most important cultural, scientific, and technical fields. One article per subject cannot hope to deal exhaustively or effectively with each subject. What is possible is for a judicious choice to reflect the general trend, the most outstanding achievement in each field, and for the sum of the articles to capture the spirit of the total American scene. This, therefore, is the aim.

In controversial and inflammatory subjects such as anthropology, finance, business, economics, history, law, military science, politics, sociology, the point of view of the selector should be that of a man of good will, a democrat believing without qualifications in the inalienable rights of man as exemplified, for instance, in the American Constitution. Such a point of view on the part of the selector should guarantee the choice of constructive material. No more need be said or can be said on this aspect, since the matter rests largely with the individual reader's subjective conscience. The foregoing is not meant, on the one hand, to insure selection of material in any propaganda sense blindly advocating the American way of life nor, on the other, to stifle authoritative, conscientious and sincere material or criticism dealing with the free discussion of systems and theories of interest to men and women living in the free societies of today or similar criticism of shortcomings in America as compared to stated ideals.

It must be remembered that an ultimate objective is to have this book published abroad. The criterion, therefore, should be fact and truth, rather than avoidance of uncomfortable issues or deliberate whitewashing.

In scientific subjects such as astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, geology, medicine, meteorology, natural history, physics, psychology, general science, the aim of the selector should be to secure authoritative articles representing the year's advances in knowledge of some important aspect of each subject. In case of need, selected articles will be submitted to expert opinion for judgment as to statements of fact.

In humanistic subjects such as architecture, art, literary criticism and history, classical studies, drama, essays, music, the aim of the selector should be to obtain authoritative articles or material reflecting current thought, development and speculation in these fields in America.

The spirit of the book throughout should be young, not academically dull, because the book is not conceived as a text book, but rather as a synthesis of the exciting ferment of culture which this country reveals to the perspicacious.

The standard of writing should be high; it may vary according to the subject, but it should never descend to the "popular" level, as the book is based on the belief that there are a sufficient number of intelligent people in the world willing to make an intellectual effort to read about subjects at which they are not necessarily experts but about which information in the complex modern world is essential. In deciding the standard, this formula should be used: "Articles understood by the intelligent man or woman, yet not outraging the sensibilities of the expert in that particular field."

The book is visualized as a book of "American" thought and should, therefore, reflect as far as possible the outstanding opinions, thoughts and achievements of all strata of American life by writers of all origins and faiths, and not preponderantly represent one set, class, clique, etc. "American" in this context excludes foreign writers appearing even exclusively in American periodicals. It also excludes resident aliens writing in America, unless such aliens are incorporated into the American stream of life and thought. This is not meant to exclude all writers who do not have proof of U. S. citizenship (an obviously impractical and ridiculous procedure) but only such writers as depend for their cultural heritage or spiritual sustenance on non-American sources.

The round-table discussions resulted in the isolation of the most important subjects for material research and in the crystallizing of the mechanics of work. The interchange of the results of these group discussions proved of benefit to readers in all the research centers. One of the most important results achieved by these discussions was to put the prime emphasis on "thought" rather than "achievements" in any particular subject.

The material to be considered was confined to essays, articles, papers, etc., appearing in periodicals, journals and other like forms of publication in the period under review, with recourse to chapters of books only in the second instance. After a reader chose his subject, its most important aspect during the period was determined and three or four essays on that subject were recommended.

The typical report of a reader searching for material on "*Theatre*" for the American book (a procedure paralleled in London and Buenos Aires) runs as follows:

SOURCES:

*Indexes*

Bulletin of Bibliography  
Dramatic Index

Readers Guide to Periodical Literature  
International Index



*Periodicals*

American Mercury	The International Arts Quarterly
American Speech	National Theatre Conference Bulletin
The Atlantic Monthly	The New Yorker
The Call Board	The New York Times Magazine
The Carolina Play-Book	Players Magazine
The Chicago Review	Poet-lore
Christian Science Monitor Magazine	Saturday Review of Literature
The Community Theatre Cue	Stage Pictorial
Cue	Theatre Arts Monthly
The Drama Leaguer	
Dramatics	

## PROCEDURE:

There seemed to be four important main ideas in the field of *Theatre*: (1) The Playwright-Critic battle, (2) the effect of the English Old Vic Company on the American stage, (3) the formation and discussion of a United States National Theatre, and (4) the recommendations of the National Theatre Conference.

My first recommendation: The Community Theatre in the Next Decade by Sawyer Falk (*Theatre Arts Monthly*) is top notch in this field. It has a provocative theme and is of primary importance this year.

My second recommendation: The State of the Theatre by Harold Clurman (*The New York Times*) is excellently written and says a great deal more than the usual on the theme. Its drawback may be that the author does not offer concrete solutions.

My third recommendation: Toward a National Theatre by Robert Porterfield and Robert Breen (*Theatre Arts Monthly*) has been the basis for a great deal of discussion and subsequent action.

Other essays considered were: My Neck is Out by Wolcott Gibbs (*The New Yorker*), Drama Critic Replies to his Critics by L. Nichols (*The New York Times*), Ducking Stool by Rosamond Gilder (*Theatre Arts Monthly*), Concerning the Jukeses by J. M. Brown (*Saturday Review of Literature*), The Theatre of the Future by Margaret Webster (*The Chicago Review*), The Alternative to Broadway by Eric Bentley (*Arizona Quarterly*).

## THE BRITISH BOOK

Once the material (the result of many months of work) was classified, a final selection was made in numerous and detailed discussions. It was found that on some subjects there was no

apt material—sometimes it was too technical in nature to fit the policy of the book, at other times it was descriptive or summarizing, rather than consisting of original and constructive “thought.” Thus, of the many subjects considered, only about half were ultimately included.

It was a general rule not to shorten any of the material and cutting was only reluctantly resorted to in a few cases of articles of extraordinary length, but of great importance to the book.

The essays were chosen primarily for their qualities of original thought; the points of view expressed in them do not necessarily conform with the points of view of those concerned with the compiling of the book. The most that the publishers claim, as they did for *American Thought 1947*, is that the book *as a whole* is widely representative of the activity of the best minds in Britain, that it is intellectually honest, “young,” and provocative in approach.

British authors, editors, institutions and publishers were most cooperative and are hereby thanked for this very encouraging attitude. Apologies are due from the Publisher (and are herewith respectfully tendered) to those editors and authors who granted permission for the use of their material, most regretfully not included at the last moment merely for reasons of space.

VLADIMIR IVANOVIC, *Publisher*.

## BRITISH THOUGHT 1947



WHAT NEXT IN THE AIR?

by SIR BEN LOCKSPEISER

IT is always useful when looking forward to begin by looking backward. Nothing ever comes out of the blue, there is a continuity in all things. Great inventions which have all the appearance of something entirely new are the culminating points of scientific research extending over many years and contributed to by workers in many fields—often apparently unrelated fields. The latest invention, the atomic bomb, perhaps the most significant of all and certainly the most pregnant for good or ill of the entire human race, goes at least as far back as Faraday. And so it is in aeronautics. The legend of Icarus is a sufficient indication of the early desire of man to fly, and his tragic fate in defying the will of the gods never daunted the spirit of man nor weakened that desire. When science had produced gases lighter than air he rose from the ground in balloons but he was at the mercy of all the winds that blew. It was not until the scientist and engineer had produced the internal-combustion engine that man was able to take the step towards controlled flight and fulfil a dream cherished throughout the ages.

Many of the earlier pioneers of flight lost their lives in their daring attempts. Knowledge was very scanty. The Wright brothers were the first to make a scientific attack on the problem of controlled flight. They used a wind tunnel for measuring the lift and drag forces on a wing shape and discovered the reason for the phenomenon known as stalling. They made a successful flight because they first attacked the significant scientific problem

*From FUTURE BOOKS, Marjorie Bruce Milne, Editor*

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and incorporated the knowledge thus gained into design. And from that day scientific research has brought the same powerful and certain methods of attack to bear on the problems of flight. One by one the seemingly intractable problems of aerodynamics—the science dealing with the flow of air over surfaces of various shapes—have been solved by mathematical physicists of this country and elsewhere and the results of their studies are to be seen in every aspect of the design of the modern aircraft: in the shape of the wing surfaces to give the best lift characteristics and the least drag, in the stability which has been evolved from rather rudimentary and perhaps chancy beginnings, and in the remarkable controllability which enables the modern high-speed aircraft to manoeuvre as it does. Further, scientific research has been at the elbow of the structural engineer who, step by step, has removed struts, wires and everything externally supporting wings and tail surfaces, until eventually we have reached the position of having what is called a clean design. The metallurgist has been at work progressively producing lighter and lighter alloys for the same strength, and research on power plants has led to a marvel of engineering as exemplified by the modern aero-engine which can generate more than one lb. of thrust for one lb. in weight. All this has taken place in a comparatively short time. A revolution in design from a wooden structure covered in fabric to a monoplane built up of hollow shells of duralumin has been accomplished.

Great progress was made in military aeronautics during the war. There is a good reason for this. A very large scientific effort was made and experimental advances were continually brought to the touchstone of practical tests. Every sortie against the enemy was such a test. But although progress in military aeronautics has a profound influence on civil aeronautics the emphasis attached to the various characteristics, which in the aggregate determine a good aeroplane, is different in the two cases. Rate of climb, rate of turn and manoeuvrability to engage or disengage in combat are very desirable qualities in fighter aircraft, but are of little importance for civil aircraft where emphasis is rather on safety, regularity and economy. High speed is vital to military aircraft where an extra 50 miles per hour may make all the difference between life and death. Speed is not so dominant a factor in civil

types. This is not to say that speed in civil aviation is not a main objective. It is; for speed is the significant factor which differentiates flying from other forms of travel, and man shows no signs of fixing a limit to the speed at which he wishes to move about. But high speed will only be possible through due economy of effort. Flying demands engines of high powers which necessarily consume large quantities of fuel. It is not so much the cost of the fuel which matters as its weight and the space which has to be given up to it at the expense of passengers. Therefore let us devote a little time to examining the problem in simple terms.

When a body is moved forward in the air it is subject to forces which can be conveniently divided into two categories—one in the line of motion and opposing it and the other at right angles to it. The former represents the drag on the body and the latter the lift. In order that an aircraft shall fly level at a constant speed, the thrust of the engine must just balance the drag and the lift so developed must equal the total weight. Increased drag means increased engine weight and increased fuel load. We pay a heavy price for unnecessary drag, and to its reduction research devotes a large part of its effort.

It is not possible in heavier-than-air craft to get lift without drag but it is only too easy to get drag without lift, and the first and obvious step was to remove all excrescences, bulges and struts to produce a clean streamline design. This has very largely been accomplished and for some years past interest has been concentrated on a careful study of the nature of air flow round shaped surfaces, with important consequences to the reduction of drag. These investigations show that when air flows over an aircraft wing surface it may do so in one of two ways. In one type of flow the wing as it speeds through the air drags a thin layer of air with it as though this layer were composed of a pack of very thin cards. The lowest card moves with the wing and each card drags and slips past its neighbour, the top card of the layer remaining at rest. This particular type of flow is called laminar flow. The actual layer affected is itself comparatively thin, and the air above is quite unaffected. In the other type of flow, called turbulent flow, the air is set in a rotational or eddying motion. This mixes up the air and a large disturbed wake is left behind. This is all waste, and turbulence is in fact a means of dissipating energy. These

are two distinct types of flow and there is no doubt which pays the better. The drag of a wing with laminar flow around it is generally many times smaller than when the flow is turbulent, and if it were possible to produce laminar flow over the whole surface the least possible drag would be obtained and the least possible price paid in getting it through the air. It would then slip through air in very much the same way as a piece of wet soap slips through the fingers.

We know how to obtain laminar flow over a large part of the wing surface and we have achieved it both in the wind tunnel and in flight. The conditions required are threefold: First, the air through which the aircraft flies must itself be free from turbulence; secondly, the pressure conditions along the wing must be favourable, i.e. the pressure must fall steadily; and thirdly, the surface of the wing or body must be very smooth and free from waviness. The third set of conditions is very exacting, as the surface smoothness must be equivalent to that of writing paper and any waviness of the surface must be restricted to one or two thousandths of an inch in two inches measured in the direction from leading to trailing edge of the wing. Rather more waviness can be tolerated in the direction along the span. Fortunately, the first condition is always satisfied in free air. The air is much better in this respect than the best wind tunnel. We know how to satisfy the second condition over a large part of the surface by providing wing sections of special shape. This is a problem which has been solved by mathematical methods, and a group of very able mathematicians in this country have made outstanding contributions to this work. The third condition is a question of manufacture and maintenance. Difficult problems are involved but our designers and manufacturers have already gone a long way towards solving them.

It has not been possible to obtain laminar flow, even experimentally, over the whole of the wing surface although we have been successful over the larger part. It is not possible to maintain a falling pressure gradient over the whole of the wing profile, and at some point towards the rear the laminar type of flow changes to a turbulent variety, breaking away from the surface of the wing and giving rise to a turbulent wake. And we are not likely to succeed by cunning aerodynamic shapes and skilful manufacture



alone. It will probably be necessary to supplement these by including suction slots on the wing surface to divert a part or whole of the air boundary layer into the wing, and so providing the most desirable type of air flow. Wing suction will probably play an important part in the evolution of the wing design of the future. Flight with heavier-than-air craft is only possible because of the existence of aerofoils, i.e. shaped bodies whose lift is many times greater than their drag, and, in the ceaseless quest to maximise lift and minimise drag, control of the boundary layer by suction or even blowing will probably play a significant part. The aircraft wing of the future, relying perhaps as much on the partial removal or the reinforcement of the air boundary layer as on the shape itself for controlling the aerofoil, will no doubt be a more complex affair than present-day wings. A price will of course have to be paid for this complication but as it is hoped eventually to obtain a wing drag of not more than about one-third of what is now common, the price should be well worth paying.

It is not at all easy, indeed it may be impossible, to treat the body or fuselage in the same way; and this leads directly to the conclusion that if we wish to build aircraft of very low drag, bodies ought to be either very much reduced in size or, better still, abolished with their tailplanes. We thus arrive inevitably at the conception of the tail-less aircraft. The functions of the tail of a conventional aircraft in providing the necessary elements of stability and control are fulfilled in the tail-less aircraft by sharply sweeping back the wings and fitting what are called elevons to the rear outer part of the wings. These are used differentially as ailerons to control the aircraft in roll or in unison as elevators to control it in pitch. Vertical surfaces on the wing tips can be used to turn the aircraft, but as they contribute nothing to its efficiency it would be as well not to introduce them. There are means of providing control in turning, by increasing drag on one side or the other at will by the use of drag flaps which provide drag without lift. The Germans are said to have used a scheme satisfactorily in which square poles housed in the wings are pushed out at the wing tips.

The all-wing aircraft dispenses with the fuselage, and since pilot, crew, passengers and fuel must all be carried in the wings in such an aircraft it must necessarily be very large. To reap the

full reward the all-up weight of such an aircraft will be something like 100 tons (corresponding figure for the Lancaster is about 30 tons). This of course is only the technical side of the story. The degree of comfort which it is possible to provide in an all-wing aircraft may not be acceptable but I believe that this disability, if it exists at all, will not operate for night flying. Sleeping berths in a wing can be made every bit as comfortable as those in a conventional aircraft body and I think it likely that fast long-distance all-wing civil aircraft will emerge as the best type of aircraft for night passengers and mails. Long-range flight on the main trunk routes of the world demands the highest practical cruising speeds, the aim being to connect the principal capitals of the world by overnight service. This means high speeds both to take account of headwinds, which may be up to 100 miles per hour on the North Atlantic, and to compensate for loss of clock-time when travelling in an eastward direction.

Speed can be obtained in either of two ways—less drag or more engine power. Some of the possibilities in reduction of air drag have already been examined and we must now turn our attention to engine power.

The coming of the internal combustion turbine has opened up revolutionary possibilities both by the nature of the turbine engine itself and by the introduction of propulsion by jet in place of an airscrew. The principle underlying jet propulsion is elementary—it is simply illustrated by a lawn sprinkler which by discharging a jet of water from the tip of each arm produces, by reaction, thrusts which cause the arms to rotate. The discharge of any other liquid, or steam or air, would produce rotation equally well. The thrust obtained from a jet of any kind is proportional to the mass of matter discharged in unit time and the velocity of discharge. One particular jet engine discharges hot gases produced by the combustion of paraffin with oxygen, which it collects from the atmosphere, at the rate of 38 lb. per sec., with a velocity of 1,700 ft. per sec. From the product of these quantities one would expect a thrust of 2,000 lbs., and this thrust has in fact been obtained.

Although the two forms of propulsion by jet and propeller are characteristically different they are not different in principle. The propeller collects air, accelerates it by the action of its blades

and discharges it to the rear. The jet engine collects air through its intakes, increases its pressure many times by the combustion of fuel and discharges it to the rear at high speed through a jet pipe. The significant difference between the two is that the mass discharge per second from the propeller is much greater than that of the jet whilst the velocity of discharge is much less. The two forms of propulsion are not equally efficient. At low aircraft speeds the propeller is the more efficient but the efficiency of jet propulsion increases rapidly with speed while that of the propeller falls. The jet begins to overhaul its rival at about 550 miles per hour and at 700 miles per hour is well ahead. This is the main reason why the jet principle is so eminently suitable for propulsion of aircraft at high speeds.

The internal-combustion turbine has many advantages over its rival the piston engine. It is lighter and less costly to manufacture for equivalent power. The aircraft in which it is installed is singularly free from vibration, which contributes materially to the comfort of passengers. It can run on Diesel fuel or paraffin, which do not call for the manufacture of the specialised high-octane fuels required by the piston engine and which, by virtue of their lower inflammability, diminish the fire risk. With jet propulsion at low speeds the turbine is less economical in fuel consumption than the piston engine, but the balance can be redressed by coupling the turbine engine to a propeller. The internal-combustion turbine, with propeller propulsion for low speeds and jet propulsion for high, is undoubtedly the aero-engine of the future and it is doubtful whether the piston engine, except perhaps in the smaller horse-power class, will survive in the air for more than three or four years.

We are in sight, therefore, of engines of very large power, economical in weight and space, and of means of obtaining much lower aircraft drags than have been hitherto within our reach. What sort of speeds will these gains make possible? Are we likely to see spectacular rises in speeds in the future?

High aircraft speeds are always difficult to obtain because the horse-power required to propel any given aircraft at a particular altitude varies as the cube of the speed. If 2,000 horse-power is needed for 300 m.p.h., the horse-power rises to 8,000 for 600 m.p.h., but an additional obstacle is the greatly increased drag

which occurs at or near the speed of sound. This introduces an entirely new phenomenon. It is not immediately obvious why this increase in drag should occur, neither is it obvious what the speed of sound has got to do with the matter.

An aircraft flying below the speed of sound—or subsonically, as it is called—signals as it were its approach to the air ahead and the air has time to be disturbed in such a way that the aircraft surfaces slip through it. The air conforms to a smooth curved flow pattern which extends forward of the aircraft and with this flow pattern are associated pressure changes in the air which are the source of both the lift and drag of the aircraft. Pressure changes of this order of magnitude are automatically transmitted through air with the speed of sound. A subsonic aircraft therefore signals its arrival ahead, at the speed of sound, and the air conforms to allow the passage of the aircraft. Aircraft surfaces are shaped to take full advantage of this phenomenon.

Now supposing the aircraft is itself travelling at the speed of sound. Obviously in this case it cannot signal ahead because its signals reach a point simultaneously with the aircraft itself. Further, if the aircraft is travelling faster than sound it beats its own signal system and arrives ahead of its own signals. When, therefore, an aircraft is travelling at or above the speed of sound, known as supersonic speeds, the air ahead of the aircraft cannot be prepared for its arrival, it can no longer slip through the air and inevitably it meets the air head on, producing what is called a shock wave.

This is the cause of the extremely high drag suddenly encountered at the speed of sound and poses problems of great difficulty. All the advantages of carefully controlled smooth air flow are swept away and new flow patterns; extremely expensive in drag and therefore in horse-power, appear in their place. This calls for new wing designs to minimise the shock effect at supersonic speeds, for it is impossible by its very nature to avoid it. Wings with razor-sharp edges are best for very much the same reason that a bullet which travels above the speed of sound has a sharply pointed nose. If we can no longer slip through the air we must cut our way through. But sharp-edged wings are very different from our present-day wings with their rounded noses for subsonic flight, and since the supersonic aircraft must take off and land at

subsonic speeds we are obviously in a dilemma and we shall somehow have to make the best of both worlds.

The speed of sound in air is 760 m.p.h. at sea level. It decreases with the lowering of temperature and therefore with altitude, so that at 30,000 ft. it has fallen to 660 m.p.h. At these speeds the air piles up ahead of the aircraft but formidable difficulties of the same nature are encountered at rather lower speeds than that of sound. This is because the air is accelerated over certain parts of the aircraft surface and the local aircraft velocity relative to air reaches that of sound in these regions although the forward speed of the aircraft is below it. Under these conditions the air piles up locally—a local shock stall. The consequent increase of drag is serious. Further, this phenomenon is liable to give rise to partial or complete loss of control and dangerous vibrations of the aircraft structure. It was because of largely increased drag that the speed of the Meteor was limited to 606 m.p.h. If it had not been for this the Meteor with the thrust of the Derwent engine would have reached a speed of 720 m.p.h.

Aeronautical scientists the world over have been tackling these problems with vigour. A significant advance has been made in Germany where it has been discovered that the shock stall can be delayed by sweeping back the wings. It cannot be delayed indefinitely, but a sweep-back of  $40^\circ$  has been found to allow an extra forward speed of about 100 m.p.h. before the shock stall is reached in a high-speed aircraft. We shall probably see a radical change in design of high-speed aircraft, leading to something like an arrow-head with tail surfaces, if the tail is retained, conforming to the same arrow-head shape.

We have already noted some technical reasons in favour of large aircraft, but as they become larger and heavier the undercarriage presents great difficulties in design and may very well become proportionately heavier. The function of the undercarriage is not only to provide wheels for take-off and landing but also to act as a shock absorber. Since the undercarriage has to be able to deal successfully with a shock load produced by impact with the ground of an aircraft falling with a velocity of 12 ft. per second, one can understand why in a 200-ton aircraft the undercarriage will weigh about 12 tons.

This is of course waste load in the air and some think it would

be better to abolish undercarriages altogether and launch aircraft either by catapult or from trolleys propelled by rockets. Both these methods are feasible but they tie the operation of the aircraft down to aerodromes where this equipment is installed. What is not so feasible is landing an aircraft without an undercarriage. It is one thing to leave an undercarriage behind on take-off but quite another to pick one up on landing. But it is not impossible provided the term "undercarriage" is interpreted in a very wide sense. It generally pays to place even elaborate equipment on the ground if, thereby, heavy equipment, or equipment which takes up considerable space, can be eliminated from the aircraft. Steady continuous effort can be anticipated on these lines. Nevertheless, it will be many years before the landplane can dispense with its own undercarriage.

The flying boat of course needs no undercarriage and at large weights—100 tons and above—appears for this reason to beat its rival the landplane in structure weight. The estimated gain in payload is considerable—about 4 tons for a 200-ton boat—and in the ceaseless quest for increased payloads some are looking to the large flying boat to carry the main air traffic over the oceanic trunk routes of the future. To exploit the possibilities of the flying boat to the full, prepared sheltered waterways as elaborate and as expensive as the modern land airfield would be necessary, but for a maritime Commonwealth such as ours this may be an economic capital expenditure. We shall no doubt see flying boats of 100 tons and more, but the proportion of the world's traffic carried by them depends so much on operational conditions which can only come out of experience that it is difficult to predict their place in civil aviation of the future.

So far we have only considered aircraft which derive their lift from stationary wings, but the first attack on the problems of flight, long before this was mechanically possible, was in imitation of the bird. Flapping and rotating wings were the object of detailed study as far back as the fourteenth century, and Leonardo da Vinci left several valuable and interesting sketches of an aircraft-like machine with lifting screws rotating about a vertical axis, now called a helicopter.

The aerodynamic and mechanical problems of the helicopter are formidable. The thrust is obtained by tilting the rotor disc

forward and the variation in axial flow through the rotor with forward speed imposes severe aerodynamic conditions which have to meet all contingencies including that of engine failure. These call for very rapid automatic pitch control of the blades which is complicated by the fact that the aerodynamic consequences of changes in axial flow through the rotor vary from blade root to tip. Several types of aircraft design—to solve these and other problems—have been worked at, on and off, during the last twenty years, but it was not until Sikorsky built his helicopter in America during the war that a widespread interest was aroused. Three German experimental types, Focke, Flettner and Doblhoff, have flown successfully.

With the present designs of helicopters a height of 50 to 100 ft. from the ground is a dangerous one in the event of engine failure during hovering flight. This is because stoppage of the power, followed by autorotation of the blades, changes the direction of air flow through the rotor disc from downwards to upwards. It takes time to change the state of flow and during the process height is lost and a large vertical velocity is gained. For disc loadings of present helicopters, of the order of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  lb./sq. ft., the loss of height would be about 100 ft. and the vertical velocity 30 ft. per second. The helicopter under these conditions can only be landed safely if a special undercarriage is provided to absorb the energy of descent, which cannot be achieved except at the expense of increased structure weight.

The problem can be dealt with in three ways:

- (1) by reducing the disc loading;
- (2) by increasing the mass of the rotor, so increasing the amount of stored energy; and
- (3) by putting excess power into the rotor, another means of increasing the stored energy.

All these solutions present difficulties but it is very likely that one of them or a combination of all three will be used in the future designs.

In all helicopters in which the blades are driven by externally applied power, the rotor torque must be balanced out. In the Sikorsky helicopter a small auxiliary rotor driven from the engine

and located at the tail gives thrust at right angles to the line of flight. The alternative solution to this problem lies in using a pair of rotors rotating side by side in opposite senses, as in the Focke helicopter. In the Flettner helicopter, intended for ship-borne operation, there are two intermeshing-bladed rotors, the two drive shafts having an included angle of  $24^\circ$ , and the centres of the two hubs being about 2 ft. apart. Longitudinal and lateral control is obtained by joint cyclic pitch change of the two rotors. Yawing control is by a combination of rudder and differential pitch control of the two rotors. A blade pitch governor is provided which holds the rotor revolutions per minute constant within certain limits, the lower limit being the safe revolutions per minute in the case of engine failure.

The Doblhoff type is an experimental single-seater helicopter, in which a single rotor is driven by jets on the blade tips. There is of course no torque to be balanced out in this case. An aircraft engine is used to drive a supercharger, and the compressed air is mixed with fuel which is metered to maintain the correct fuel/air ratio. The combustible mixture is ducted to the hub and out through the three blades where it is burnt in combustion chambers at the blade tips. The fuel consumption is, of course, very high, and it was the intention of the inventor to use the jets only for relatively short periods for hovering, takeoff and landing, translational flight being obtained by reverting to the auto-rotational regime, for which purpose a pusher propeller could be clutched to the engine.

The possibilities in an aircraft which is not tied to specially prepared aerodromes and can land and take off from any clear space slightly bigger than its own dimensions are obviously far-reaching. The helicopter will probably become the air taxi of the future, transporting passengers from the main airports, situated outside towns because of their very large size, to town centres. Large stores, clubs and office blocks will doubtless provide themselves with flat roofs for the landing of helicopters and it may be expected that the helicopter will eventually be used on a large scale for private flying.

The conquest of the air, like so many other scientific achievements, is fraught with great good or great ill for mankind. Few would deny, with the experience of the late war in mind, that on



balance mankind has lost heavily by flying and with the advent of atomic energy stands to lose more heavily still, even to the extent of destroying the civilisation that nurtured the achievement. Great civilisations have existed in the past only to disappear and return to the dust from which they came when they shirked the disagreeable but inexorable need to adjust themselves to the environment of their own making. Our civilisation has grown up lopsided, concentrating on the achievement of a truly wonderful mechanical proficiency at the expense of social and ethical progress. Man is a gregarious animal but his progress in the art and science of living together has been slow and comparatively halting. His social and political institutions are no longer consistent with, and no longer suffice to control, his scientific achievements. That inconsistency must be made good if his present civilisation is to survive. This is a task primarily for every one of us and it is perhaps the most urgent and most fateful of all.

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## ARCHITECTURE

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### A LETTER ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

by MAXWELL FRY

At sea, January 1946

**M**Y DEAR J.,  
I have not the temerity to address readers whom I cannot imagine on a subject in which I feel insecure, but you and I having so often talked of architecture sitting on our verandah at Accra, I can continue in the same vein to you without feeling myself launched upon perilous seas, and there may be more value in writing now as I approach England than later from the midst of it.

I remember how one evening as we discussed our attitude to the mechanistic side of modern life you read with glowing emphasis D. H. Lawrence's poem that starts with the line

There is no point in work unless it absorbs you. . . .

and ends abruptly with

we will cancel the machines we have got

and how our affection for what is innocent and unconscious in the African way of life was stirred by the lines

. . . so with houses, ships, shoes, wagons or cups or loaves  
Men might put them forth as a snail in its shell, as a bird that leans  
its breast against its nest, to make it round.

And remembering this I add to it the sense of an argument that took place in Boston in which we qualified our welcome of science

*From HORIZON, Cyril Connolly, Editor*  
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and industrialism by saying that we accepted them as a fate but took leave to look every new gift horse in the mouth, hoping to know the difference between teeth and fangs.

Events justify our lack of faith, but they do not, I think, turn us from an attitude toward architecture that accepts the material offered by the life we live but sets greater store on the spirit that transforms it. Even so this material itself is to be examined closely for its value as an agent of living. Our age, I am sure, overvalues it. Our high priests are scientists and they would have us wonder at and bow down to each new discovery, whether it be a new drug or a new machine, press echoing press in immaculate black and white print issuing endlessly, and suave, false oracular speech broadcasting it limitlessly; read and heard by millions everywhere, who, nevertheless, having read or having heard, must bend their backs once more to toil upon an earth to which science can bring no more of essential moisture to its barrenness than will make up for what it has lost to it elsewhere.

We see in Africa how the forests are being cut down and how erosion spreads its crackled dry fingers into the green land, and while we hear the pundits lecturing the poor native cultivators—the pundits from their cooled offices to the natives in the bush—we know and the pundits know, that we have wrecked a communal life with our cash economy and destroyed a unity with our division of labour, and when we are humble and meek we acknowledge how difficult it is to recreate a unity in what we profess to be a better and a more advanced way of living.

There are those who hold no place for architecture in a recovering Europe, or no more of it than can, for instance, be compressed into a minimum home unit, the chief virtue of which, being mechanic, must be extended into further patterns which to preserve this virtue must continue mechanic. Those of us who sought to enrich the content of an evolving art by personal exploration were told to rejoin the proletarian ranks and cut no more capers on parade since it had been determined that mass destruction could only be met by mass construction, mass calling unto mass in codified elaborations of the deadeningly obvious.

This way lies death. For five years or more you and I have had to allow ourselves to be carried along by this fantastic war machine with its cumbersome, obvious and shameful expedients culmi-

nating in the atom bomb and the destruction of half the fixed assets in Europe. And are we to agree to such abnegation for ever? To go riding blindly in a procession of mechanical tanks to a last and final doom? Is there to be no more time for any play whatsoever? No hope of it even?

I prefer your proposition; to think of a life that would be worth living within the general compass of our fate and to see then to what extent material can enrich spirit, that being perhaps the essence of the contribution we make as architects towards the life we live as members of the community. Agree that the means of production bend us towards unvarying reproduction of parts, which is the opposite to the infinitely variable idea of life, then architecture has the responsibility of creating community living-places in which these unvarying modules are submerged in a variety of larger forms that give out a strong human rhythm and set a boundary to the scientific pursuit of its own death-moving efficiency, asserting the dignity of the individual through the apparently inconsequential joy of the artist.

I believe you are right to say that modern architecture has even so taken too material and too mechanical a view of its powers of expression. It was its peculiar morality to set store upon its functional integrity and to claim a unique capacity for fulfilling the demands of society with accuracy, neatness, dispatch and economy. That was understandable, even unavoidable, and it bore the merit of concentrating attention upon a set of proportions of mathematical purity, cleansed of every historical association. I was educated to a love of late Georgian architecture which I refined upon by study, but it failed to build a railway station for me, and when I first saw photographs of Mies' van der Rohe's Tugendhat house I realised with a relief that was like an opening into a new heaven that it was unnecessary that I should, here being a set of proportions circumscribing the order of space necessary to my own age with a breadth and an immaculateness the match of anything that had gone before.

Le Corbusier did the same for me in his houses at Garches and Poissy, but his restless fancy tinkered too much with the idea of interpreting the machine until his cities of steel and glass and concrete became the images of a machine state, as one may clearly see in the Brazilian developments of his ideas. Not that he stopped

there. His own buildings, on the domestic level, were exploring all sorts of richnesses not mechanic, he being the Picasso of architecture and by no means content with the range of materials thrown up by industry. His reintroduction of stone as an element of building was a poet's necessity rather than a builder's, but it corrected the course of architecture at the right moment and is a partial answer to your criticism that modern architecture has too restricted an emotional range: it was widening, if not exactly in the direction you meant.

Amid our long conversations you returned one evening, I remember, to the fascinating connection between music and architecture and halted our walk suddenly to give me a moving exposition of the qualities of the scale of notation upon which our western music is built, how one note is dominant, another repressive, how the leading note calls for a closure and so on. "And is there not," you said, "a notation for architecture? Are there not forms and spaces, and combinations of them which produce like effects? What does the dome signify? What comparative qualities has the sphere and the cube? When you design a building or a group of buildings are you aware of the effect they create? Do you consciously arrange your material or have you, to a greater extent than you have been aware of, been guided by the mere cerebral intoxication of a new set of lines and spaces which you have not yet learned properly to manipulate?"

I bethought me then of far other emotions that it might indeed evoke, finding my examples in great variety, as for instance in the view along the Piazzetta towards the lagoon, buildings closing in on each side to open with a sense of infinite release towards the pearly scape of moving water, the twin columns marking the take-off into space, and S. Maria Maggiore defining the distance. There can be feelings of compression and relief, Geoffrey Scott's "empathy" to the *n*th;—and danger. Is not the sinister danger of a Chirico painting an architectural quality that I have felt; where? I have felt it as I approached the Duke of York's steps from above. It is the danger of a precipice, the steps hidden from view. There is an end of the pavement, only the great black column standing there with nothing beyond; instinctively danger. And to find the steps, which every time I have to tell myself are there, is an anti-climax, just because ascending them, and finding

myself on the level of a new world in Waterloo Place, is so satisfactory a climax, marked and dignified by the same column for which I have therefore two separate sets of feelings, one coming and one going.

And there is another and a delicious emotion of danger which I get when I walk along an unguarded quayside, a drop into the sea on one side but on the other the protective crooked arm of the quayside buildings; and it is necessary that the curve of the quay should be concave or it would tend to throw me into the sea, in which case I should prefer railings to lean on and would enjoy still another and quite different emotion.

Then I recalled the dark recessed porch entrances of St. Marco giving into the dark womblike interior beyond, and was led from this to remember many another such cavernous ingoing with ring upon ring of articulated stratification breaking up light, diversifying shadow towards the dark mystery of the threshold, the dramatic moment of entering in. And would the effect be the greater if this cavern entrance were carved into the lower courses of some great resistant drum, a mass of stone? or must the preparation be extended in concavity, the cavern at the valley head, as it were? and I saw fresh modifications at every turn.

Faltering in my course I returned to consider the perfection of the sphere, the dead static mass of the cube, and the first suggestion of motion in the rectangular cube, and recognized at once the power of apparent motion over the emotion of the beholder, tracing it from a state of inaction in these elementary forms to its most turbulent manifestation in Baroque architecture, and wondering where and for what ends its rhythm proved most moving, in which process I found some explanation for our disappointment in New York by seeing it as an unqualified assortment of poorly articulated cubic shapes, barely beginning to be architecture, an unconscious as opposed to a meditated response to financial pressure. I found an exactly similar phenomenon at Johannesburg, which is interesting.

I could go on to compare the dim beckoning mystery of the Gothic nave with the expanding grandeur of St. Paul's, but it is enough to have elaborated your suggestions that the vocabulary of modern architecture is capable of enrichment though it lacks the service of an organized and deeply felt religion.

Obvious as some of my examples appear to me as I write them, I think they have been but little regarded by modern architects who have in years now to come to consider the modelling of large masses of buildings, not town planning on paper, but the designing of such towns as will arouse and satisfy emotions to the limits proper to architecture.

Which brings me back to the subject of this letter, the future of architecture. I wonder if you feel as uncertain about the general future as I do. Being away from England for so long, I have had to rely even more than you upon newspapers and occasional broadcasts, and the impression I have is of a Europe so badly wounded that even without the threat of atomic energy the hope of recovery hangs in the balance, the patient lacking vitality, the doctor faith. Is there anything in the world of art or science that can mend a broken heart? Where in this Europe are the young men and women to set about it? and who is there to walk beside them?

On my way through Uganda I met Ernst May, whose housing in Frankfurt once fired us with the certainty that a contemporary architecture, even where it was confined to the narrowly variable units of the municipal flat, could achieve nobility and grace. We sat talking of his hopes of working in Europe again—he is doing a plan for Kampula, the commercial capital of Uganda, at the moment, and making a lovely thing of it—and I wondered then what chance there might be of re-connecting Germany and with it Europe, with the spirit of that Weimar period and with at least some of its dispersed talent, because it will be useless to attempt to make good the material damage of war without restoring the spirit; and as we set down the mighty from their seats so we should exalt the humble and meek, the men of faith and truth.

We are better off in England, our war losses not numbering the better part of a generation as in the last war, nor subduing the faith in our star that indeed burned lower in 1938 than at any time since. I do not think it is the material aspect of reconstruction we have to measure in estimating the future of our architecture, but the extent of belief in ourselves and our capacity to live courageously and well in the circumstances allotted to us. If this is granted we may go on to inquire into the degree of acceptance of an architecture that has broken with the so-called traditions

of the past and that calls for either an appreciation of abstract form or a measure of welcome for what can now only in cynicism be called "the brave new world." I am trying to measure the extent of taste in the community and to do so I must cast about for signs of liveliness in the appreciation of music, sculpture, painting, poetry, architecture, and town planning. And what do you think of the situation? Alive or dead? It is very important because without it little is possible, and with it everything.

Technically, we can do what we can do. The problem of prefabrication, for instance, has been solved technically long ago. Our troubles in the world today arise from a lack of understanding of the art of doing things, not the technique: of the art of governing ourselves without depressing the individual, of the art of amusing ourselves, the art of living. And the art of architecture to flourish in our midst and be as a sign to Europe that the life of the spirit has not been utterly destroyed requires first an atmosphere of freedom in which the individual may range at will, an understanding of the idea of government such as swung the Labour Party into power in the moment of victory, that is, a deep and widely held feeling for justice, and years of steady material rehabilitation undisturbed by large-scale novelties taxing the common capacity of assimilation. Again I say, what do you think of the situation? How is freedom with us? and justice? and are we in good heart?

As to the form architecture is likely to take, what can one say? It will work out as it will. There is no doubt that we will continue to use the materials and evolve the structures that have produced the set of proportions that causes it to be in the proper sense of the word original, or to some tastes puritan. You say it is apt to be thin and theoretic and I agree with you. It has not, as it were, much story yet. It is unreminiscent, has no old clothes, and what clouds of glory it may trail are light and vaporous.

But it must follow its star in faith and these things will be added to it. That it has no ornament, no enrichment, worries me not at all. The egg and dart, the chevron and billet were a long time a-coming even with stone to carve and time in which to carve it. The necessity for ornament will arrive when architects are given tasks for the fulfilment of which ornament is as necessary as were the coloured story-telling windows of medieval church building



or the shock-tactic sculpture of Jesuit west ends. What we want are jobs to do in which painters and sculptors are necessary to the carrying out of the intentions of our clients, the State, the city, the company, the individual, the church or the school; that there should be a preponderance of those for whom a lively architecture has become a necessity, who see beyond the practical task of physical restoration—(how narrowly I avoided repeating rehabilitation!)—the opportunities for the creation of living conditions which the machine makes possible but the imagination makes beautiful.

If you were to ask me what indications there are of such an awakening I should point to the interest in architecture and town planning among the general public; the generous and imaginative interpretation of school building programmes by educational authorities; the growth of the National Trust not entirely because of taxation; the popularity of Puffin and King Penguin books; the rapid absorption of an expensive monograph on a living English sculptor, Henry Moore; the well-filled concert halls; British Arts Council; the current brand of humour to be found in say, *Lilliput* or *Punch* even; the kind of conversations I have had with my R.E. sergeants—you can add to the list from your own experiences travelling about England in wartime.

Only the mass of what is to be done and the pressure of time can defeat us. I marvel at the patience with which the nation bears its present situation and it gives me hope that it may not rush the position before enough men and women are returned to make rapid but orderly progress possible. We know how true this is of architectural education with six years to make up and everything to do. But what of the Continent? I wonder whether it would be possible to work out a system whereby British Architectural students should be taught a European language and sent, as Liverpool School students used to be sent, to American architects' offices, to Continental architects' offices to help them in their gargantuan task, acquire experience and extend exactly the type of practical sympathy that should come from us. I am frankly scared of losing our grip upon European civilisation, and I hold that it is so valuable to the world that we should take the most active steps to restore not only its physical but its more important spiritual manifestations.

There. We shall see.

As each day passes in indolent monotony the sun that cooked us for so many months together grows weaker, the sea greys over, and cold winds bring on the long Atlantic swell. Your Shakespeare got left out of the main packing and each day I have read a play, starting quite properly at the beginning with every intention of reaching as far as the days will take me. I can recommend this wholesale way of reading Shakespeare and I recommend Shakespeare as a cure for sick hearts, there being so much of him about in even so small a company as this ship carries that one must believe in us, and with us, our architecture.

Your,

M.

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## ART

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### A MASTER OF PASTICHE

by MICHAEL AYRTON

#### *A Personal Reaction to Picasso*

"There ought to be a dictator of painting."—Picasso, 1935.

TO WRITE anything but praise, or to attempt anything but a favourable analysis of the present value and future significance of the art of Picasso, is to be attacked at once. I have taken this risk in print on several occasions and have been variously accused of personal jealousy, fifth column activity and high treason. I have also been taken to task for changing my spots in midstream, to coin a mixed metaphor in the manner of the master's own painting. It has been pointed out to me that, like most contemporary painters, I myself have been influenced by Picasso, and that I should genuflect before the work of that great genius who has altered the course of European art. Finally I have been told that I do not understand his art.

I have never denied his genius nor its effect either upon European art or upon myself. Picasso's influence has probably been greater in his own time than that of any artist in history, and unquestionably he has changed the course, not only of art, but of decoration, and the applied arts. There is no question of his genius. I suggest, however, that changing the course of European art does not *ipso facto* improve that course and that, whilst to have done so compels admiration, it does not necessarily command veneration. Such men as Hitler have changed the course of human history to

From NEW WRITING AND DAYLIGHT, John Lehmann, Editor  
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the disadvantage of mankind, and I believe that Picasso, taking all into account, has been of very negative service to art in his changing of its course. But the one accusation I find hard to take, is that of not understanding Picasso. Heavens alive, his work is not difficult to understand. If it was really obscure, if it really required long and concentrated study, Picasso would not be the richest and the most famous artist alive. Once the fairly simple mechanism of his approach is grasped, and once one is familiar with a large body of his work, his diverse mannerisms and his recapitulation of basic themes follow an inevitable, perfectly comprehensible, course.

Picasso has required numerous art forms upon which to base his experiments. He is not concerned with nature, nor with a single tradition, and in this he differs from the artists of the past, as Woolworth's differs from the craftsman's shop. What he does is to engulf an existing formula, choosing it seems at random from the history of his art. It may be Negro sculpture, Greek vase painting, or the drawings of Ingres. This formula, once digested, he regurgitates, like the albatross feeding her young, accentuating certain characteristics and obliterating others. Having exhausted one formula he turns to another, possibly maintaining part of the first. As soon as the student recognizes the process, he will, with a fair knowledge of art history, be able to recognize the derivation and judge the value of the variations.

Nothing could be simpler than this process, and it is indicative of Picasso's genius that the objects he chooses as the vehicle for his method have always been equally simple—a table, a female nude, a piece of newsprint or an old guitar. From the point of view of the audience, the commonplace object combined with the spectator's vague familiarity with the underlying mode—the classic Greco-Roman head, for instance, establishes a comfortable association of ideas which prepares him for whatever apparently outrageous exaggeration Picasso may see fit to use to enliven his picture. Since Picasso has a magnificent gift for linear expression and complete technical mastery at his command, the result is a very tasty, or intentionally very disgusting, dish. But whatever the taste, it remains a dish; it is cooking, not art. The opposition will say nonsense; they will say that all paintings is only this, and that Picasso is perfectly entitled to employ these means since he

triumphantly justifies them. I would say that whilst this utilization of an adopted manner begins the development of all young artists, whilst the influence and traditions of his predecessors are at the basis of all great artists' work, that to carry on this procedure throughout a long life is not to develop a vision but to perfect a pastiche. Changing the derivation does not complete the artist. The difference between say, Breughel and Picasso, is that whilst Breughel produced pastiches of Bosch in his youth he looked at nature as well and eventually arrived at a mature and personal vision of nature itself, whereas Picasso has never been able to shed the element of pastiche underlying his work because he has always looked to art and not to nature to supply his visual material. Paradoxically the *dilettanti* of to-day who are so foolishly quick to despise a legitimate influence present in a young artist's work are prepared to swallow with delight the painting of Picasso whose derivations have been so blatant for forty years. Originality is in itself an exceedingly unimportant aspect of art from the point of view of the practitioner, and it has only achieved a spurious importance during the twentieth century, the very times which have been dominated by Picasso himself. This significant paradox is in my view one of the major disservices which the art of Picasso has paid to contemporary painting, for it is Picasso's transitions from one derivation to another which have created the false supposition that self-conscious variation of style is originality and therefore commendable. Genuine originality in painting is not a conscious virtue but merely the artist's minute personal addition made to a tradition by the study of nature. In a broadcast recently, an admirer of Picasso praised him for the fact that he had 'opened his mind with astounding versatility to a wide number of stylistic influences' and went on to enumerate them at length, as if there were some unusual virtue contained therein. But is there? and is his constant delving into the secrets of gradually evolved methods applicable to the problems and ways of thought of divers times past, compatible with Picasso's mystic dictum, 'I find, I do not seek'? Theft may be the perquisite of genius in an art but kleptomania is another thing.

Perhaps the reply to my argument would be to repeat that any means are legitimate to attain the ends and are not Picasso's ends marvellous? In my view the whole of Picasso's art has been an

intellectual exercise of which ninety per cent has been pure artistic vampirism without the natural visual stimulus necessary to produce great art. Picasso is a genius after all and can only be judged by those standards, for his ends are, if nothing else, marvellous as sheer virtuosity. Marvellous, but utterly false, and the means carry with them, in Picasso's supernormal talents, a tremendous power to communicate the spurious and to menace the living stream which the visual arts have been since pre-history. Picasso's achievement has been to juggle with the archaic so fast that it appears alive as it glitters in mid-air. Had he not been an acrobat, as Jean Cocteau remarked, he would not have saved himself. Picasso's intellectual power is coated with the fierce colour of his nationality. The trappings of Spanish passion, bulls, women, guitars, blood and cruelty, recur at intervals and convey, again I think by association of ideas and brilliance in performance, deep, vital emotions which, in my own view, are often simply not there.

I do not believe that it is possible to create living art out of anything but the direct visual experience of nature, combined with the heritage of a tradition, unless it be by the practice of magic ritual. Since Picasso does not attempt the former, he must be considered in terms of the latter, and considered in these terms his processes of stylistic inversion and formal disintegration are black magic, no more, no less. That inversion and disintegration of form are present in most of his work may be easily observed at once in Cubism, which was based on the latter principle and in the convention which he has employed at intervals, of restating the human head in unrelated sections.<sup>1</sup> The parallel with black magic can be carried further, for destructive distortion and alteration of ritual is the basis of diabolism. To his most devoted admirers he is celebrated for his gift for paraphrase. Black magic is also the cult of personal power, and fame goes with it. Of these two latter attributes Picasso shows no lack. He is the most powerful influence and the most famous artist alive, but is it possible that any contribution to the mainstream of European art can be made by his particular form of diabolic egocentricity? In view of the fact that black magic is a death cult and in view of the fact

<sup>1</sup> 'In my case a picture is a sum of destructions' Picasso, 1935 *Conversation with Picasso*—Christian Zervos—Cahiers d'Art, 1935.

that the whole impetus of Picasso's art stems from manners and modes created for now extinct ends—the Romanesque, Catalan primitives, the Greek vase and medieval stained glass are examples—he is a very master of necrophily. Magnificent embalming—but death all the same.

Regarded without hysteria, it is surely plain enough that Picasso's constant, mercurial changes of style, which are to-day extolled as the fruits of an unique and all-embracing genius, are not a genuine development but speculative conjuring. Remarkable though it is to have pulled so many rabbits from a three-cornered hat, it is not necessarily a superior procedure to the more prosaic course of visual development employed by all previous great masters of painting.

It is obvious that present-day transport and world-wide communications have made it possible for the twentieth-century artist to acquire a greater general knowledge of the world's art without leaving his capital city, than could his sixteenth-century predecessor. But Picasso's eclecticism is not excusable simply on the grounds that earlier masters would have utilized the same gamut of stylistic derivation as Picasso, had they had the opportunity. I do not believe that they would, because once each, following in his natural tradition, had accepted from his predecessors the influences of best service to his vision, he turned to nature for his material. Pieter Breughel, for instance, learned much from Hieronymus Bosch and Joachim Patenir in his youth, and indeed he scrupulously imitated the Bosch for several years; Watteau acknowledged and paid his debt to Rubens, El Greco to Tintoretto and Goya to Velasquez, but these men must have been equally well aware of other aspects of painting. Breughel must have seen Italian and Spanish pictures, Rembrandt, in his days of affluence, collected every form of *objet d'art* from Indian miniatures to Mantegnas, and Watteau knew the collections of pictures from all the European schools which were assembled in Paris, and so on. But these artists having assimilated what was useful to their own art, from that of other men and other times, looked at the object, and adapted it to their purposes. Herein they differ radically from Picasso, for they discarded the borrowed props of style quite early in life, in favour of natural observation. The art of a Breughel, a Rembrandt, or a Goya is a complete and logical develop-

ment from beginning to end, so is that of Rouault or Renoir and even that of Blake; for though the latter borrowed technical crutches from the Italians, and though nature was a secondary consideration in his art, his expression was consistent and its strength lies in that consistency. Blake was not remarkable as a technician and his own technical shortcomings excuse to some extent his borrowed mannerisms. No such excuse is needed by Picasso, the greatest technician of his age.

I suggest that the sheer instability of Picasso's genius is not a priceless miracle, but simply the result of exhausting the possibilities of manner to such an extent that his most original-looking works are actually those in which he combines his own early periods with his current clichés, thus confusing the obvious sources. And yet he himself has strenuously denigrated self-imitation.<sup>2</sup> The effect that idolatry of these essential weaknesses has had on his numerous followers has been to deify an originality which in actual fact is only ingenuity.

It is, however, obvious that no individual could maintain such sway over the arts for so long, nor carry such conviction to so many intelligent and sensitive artists and laymen, unless he was possessed of tremendous powers. What these powers are, has been dilated upon at enormous length in numerous publications, but what I surmise they amount to is this: Picasso is a master technician and his many 'periods,' whilst they may not accord with the development of a real vision, are at least in accord with the prevailing hysteria of the times. Furthermore, the immense excitement, which Picasso is able to evoke, is in part due to his superb use of line, for he is primarily a draughtsman, and also to the emotion provoked by the novelty of his gift for paraphrase and his ability to carry a discovery, or the product of a movement, to a logical, or sometimes illogical, conclusion. It is part of his power that he is able to embrace the efforts of lesser men and restate their aims, in his own terms and in relation to the formula current in his own work. This in itself is the hallmark of a particular form of genius. But more than all this, his power lies in his position relative to his times, his temporal domination. Nor is this incompatible with the archaism of the different stylistic starting points of each new *'epoque.'* It is that Picasso is contemporary in

<sup>2</sup> 'I have a horror of repeating myself.' Picasso, 1935. Ibid. ref.



the hysteria of his art in exactly the same way that Hitler is contemporary in the hysteria of his politics, much of which—anti-semitism is an example—is archaic in principle. In the course of profoundly disagreeing with my assessment of Picasso, a contemporary English artist once made the point that Picasso's major positive contribution to painting was his invention of the 'paraphrase of reality.' I do not believe that this is what he has done; rather I believe he has evolved a brilliant paraphrase of *art*, so brilliant and so all-embracing that one is unable to see the wood for the trees and in the immense prodigality of his gifts he has thus foxed a whole generation into believing in a set of 'emperor's new clothes.'<sup>3</sup> Idolatry has been carried so far that Picasso's every work, from doodle to mural, is now greeted with indiscriminate approval. Even a piece of torn-up paper is solemnly reproduced in a recent book. His own clichés, which he has taken to imitating in his most recent work, are marked as wondrous and immaculate conceptions, new, devastatingly new phenomena of immense value, both in terms of money and posterity. But if one examines his life work, his many periods, one finds that in each one he has but grasped at the straw of another man's discoveries and twisted it to his own ends. This activity may be wonderful in the skill of the achievement, but it is not a deep and personal vision of nature or life and its products are as transitory as the winds. In time they will date as badly as the later music of Igor Stravinsky, a very similar if less important figure.

Picasso is first seen as a child prodigy, painting with precocious skill, and in Paris at the age of nineteen he embarked upon his first recognized 'period,' which is now named after Toulouse Lautrec, who was the principal influence upon Picasso at this time. A perfectly legitimate derivation for a young artist, and undoubtedly of use to him. In 1901 he painted in a decorative, poster-like manner under the influence of van Gogh, Maurice Denis and Vuillard, and in 1902 he turned to Puvis de Chavannes, a painter of sad, blue lyrical pictures which he skilfully combined with El Greco and the seventeenth-century Baroque mannerists to produce the famous 'Blue period.' To this *râgout* he added various of Degas's subjects and much of the latter's

<sup>3</sup> 'The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies.' *ibid.* ref.

theatricality. The 'Pink period' which follows is still a fairly straightforward development from the Blue, incorporating the Harlequin of Watteau and a soft Greek flavour compatible with the wistful sentimentality which replaced the morbid gloom of the previous five years. The first of the abrupt transitions took place in 1906 when Matisse presented the young Picasso with a piece of Negro sculpture and Picasso abandoned his previous formula in favour of a stark series of pictures based on Negro art. Three years later he recognized that Negro sculpture was compatible with Cézanne's compression and separation of natural forms, to underline their organic structure. Picasso seized on this logical practice and carried it to its illogical extreme in 'cubism' where his tendency to disintegrate form was given a specious theoretical backing by various poets and apologists. By 1911 the forms were so entirely disintegrated that, far from stressing the natural structure, the sections were only related in terms of design. Originality in one sense, but the basis was Cézanne's ready-made hypothesis, and thus was still based on art and not the observation of nature. Cubism, which passed through various forms, from close imitation of Cézanne, through the 'facet cubism' of complete disintegration, arrived in 1914 at a decorative formula for producing harlequins and loaded tables which included the use of 'pointillism' which Picasso borrowed from Seurat. In 1917 Picasso went to Rome to design the ballet 'Parade' for Diaghilev and in Rome he embarked upon the first of his dual roles. He painted decorative cubist harlequins and at the same time heavy, romantic, realistic female nudes derived from Roman sculpture. His ballet designs combined both, and in 'Pulcinella' an echo of the 'Pink period' with an added overtone of *commedia del arte*. Picasso's appetite for influence now became increasingly vicarious, for he had added Ingres to his scalp belt in 1915, with a large number of pencil drawings in the manner of the great classicist. The 'neo-classic' period which resulted lasted until 1924, but the decorative cubism continued through a series of monumental still lifes which became steadily more calligraphic as Picasso's great linear gift developed. These still lifes still owed a good deal to Cézanne, but they were interwoven with various decorative conventions invented by George Braque and colour relationships derived from Matisse. The late twenties produced a wide variety of concurrent

manners from numerous sources, and it is between 1927 and 1936 that Picasso evolved something like an individual contribution to art, a synthetic but very convincing paraphrase. This was naturally a linear convention, arising out of cubism, and the paraphrase remained a paraphrase of art, but the complexity of interwoven influences was such that this very paraphrase seems to be a personal statement, culminating in the famous 'Guernica' of 1936. But during these years, and particularly between 1930 and 1934, Picasso was making hay with the Romanesque, with certain Greek conventions, with a formal still-life manner based on medieval stained glass and with variations on the theme of Mathias Grünewald's 'Crucifixion' at Colmar.

The effect of Grünewald upon Picasso has been enormous, probably the most important individual influence on his work, after Ingres, and probably also the most beneficial, since Grünewald was too big to be swallowed in one gulp and had to be digested slowly. Grünewald himself was probably the greatest Gothic expressionist, if this rather clumsy term may be permitted, who has ever lived. Torment was his métier, he twisted the limbs of his crucified Christ and lamenting Madonna into the most agonizing expressions of human suffering ever portrayed. This was grist to the cruel Spanish mill of Picasso's search for a means of expressing his own apprehension, for Picasso, naturally enough, was sensitive to the increasing misery of his times. Grünewald was the most potent source for such a statement, and from 1930 Picasso began to paint crucifixions and tormented figure pictures concurrently with neo-Greek line drawings, such as the celebrated illustrations to Ovid, curvilinear still lifes in a stained-glass manner and jolly beach pictures in which he combined his earlier Greco-Roman nudes with flat pattern cubism. The so-called 'Bone period' is, however, the most interesting of these multifarious activities, and here Grünewald was responsible for the passion and cruelty of the expression. Between 1928 and 1933 Picasso produced a great deal of sculpture, an art in the practice of which he was singularly, even uniquely, inefficient. He had no sense of the material and inevitably produced the clumsiest possible forms. To justify these heavy lumps he immediately utilized them as sources of expression in paint which he knew he could master, and grafted his Grünewald formula onto it to produce his

'Bone' pictures. In 1934 trouble in Spain turned Picasso to a reconsideration of the bullfight theme, which he made the somewhat banal symbol of his country's pain. At last he was truly moved by an emotion unrelated to art, and, in my own view, the real potential of Picasso may be seen during the brief period between 1934 and 1937. All the technical mastery and gift of expression was in those years turned to a genuine purpose. The hieratic gestures of the figures in the best of his pictures leading up to and following the 'Guernica' of 1936, are derived from Grünewald, the colour and manner from van Gogh, but here, in such key words as the 'Minotauromachy' etching and the paintings of weeping women, something like a genuine synthesis was achieved.

• Tenth-century Catalan wall painting was the next art to feed Picasso's avid appetite for formulae and the multi-eyed profiles of the years preceding the 1939 war are derived from that source. During the war, to judge from the pictures recently exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum, he has neither advanced nor added any new conventions to those existing in 1938, except in etching, where his aquatint illustrations of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* are variations on Chinese and perhaps Persian mannerisms.

This brief chronology does not pretend to be complete, because since 1917 Picasso has produced pictures in several different modes concurrently, with a dazzling inconsistency which gives the lie to most of them. Some contain sections with different and incompatible styles in different parts of the same picture.

What then is the sum total? What is the actual value of the pictorial three-ring circus? I believe that no part of it is great art, by absolute standards, but everyone knows that it is great accomplishment by any standards, and that all of it possesses the power to excite. To pin the history of one's own times, like a butterfly to a setting board, takes genius, and that Picasso has done; to influence the visual approach of half the world requires supernormal power, and this Picasso has; but in my view neither of these impressive achievements adds up to great art. In the hierarchy of the great masters, the greatest have a quality beyond the temporal which Picasso lacks, and shock tactics are not a final way to alter human vision. The crux and centre of Picasso's art is, in my view, hysteria and in this he so echoes the prevailing evil of the age that

he seems to be its prophet. Added to this is the element of speed, which Picasso has brought to such a jet-propelled perfection that he can hit the target of taste with repeated but varied hammer blows. For several years now he has painted enormous canvases at the rate of one or more per day, apart from his enormous production of drawings, etchings, lithographs, and sculpture. One of his many styles is therefore almost bound to strike a chord in the personal taste of each individual spectator. One final thing has helped to make Picasso the monument of his time, and that is the useful fact that his painting almost invariably looks better in reproduction than in the original. This is in part due to the fact that Picasso is first and last a draughtsman and quality of paint is never a very important consideration in his work, so that his pictures tell on a small scale as,—say, a Renoir does not. A glance at the recent works at the Victoria and Albert Museum demonstrates this at once. There is no feeling for the medium of oil paint in any of these pictures. A very high proportion of his reputation rests on reproduction, for he is the most widely publicized painter in history, and the hurried and faulty craftsmanship of much of his recent larger work is not discernible in a book of plates on a fairly small scale, whilst the immense output always provides material for new publications.

The whole body of Picasso's work amounts, in my opinion, to a vast series of brilliant paraphrases on the history of art. This is in itself a wonderful phenomenon entirely compatible with the times, but I believe that it is only of value viewed in this light. In terms of the art of painting, in terms of the living, breathing symbol of man's tribute to the work of God, it is no more than a vast erection of bones in the graveyard of experience.

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## ASTRONAUTICS

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### THE CHALLENGE OF THE SPACESHIP

by ARTHUR C. CLARKE

**A**N historian of the twenty-first century, looking back past our own age to the beginnings of human civilisation, will be conscious of four great turning points which mark the end of one era and the dawn of a new and totally different mode of life. Two of these events are lost, probably forever, in the primeval night before history began. The invention of agriculture led to the founding of settled communities and gave Man the leisure and social intercourse without which cultural progress is impossible. The taming of fire made him virtually independent of climate and, most important of all, led to the working of metals and so set him upon the road of technological development—that road which was to lead, centuries later, to the steam engine, the Industrial Revolution, and the age of steel and petrol and surface transportation through which we are now passing.

The third revolution began, as all the world knows, in a squash-court in Chicago, on December 2, 1942, when the first self-sustaining nuclear reaction was started by man. We are still too close to that cataclysmic event to see it in its true perspective, but we know that it will change our world, for better or for worse, almost beyond recognition. And we know, too, that it is linked with the fourth and in some ways greatest change of all—the crossing of space and the exploration of the other planets.

The first spaceships capable of reaching another world may still lie a generation ahead, but the giant rocket is already with us and will soon be carrying men to the limits of the atmosphere

*From JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH INTERPLANETARY SOCIETY, Alan E. Slater, Editor*  
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and beyond. Though we may doubt whether the American Air Force will land a guided missile on the Moon inside eighteen months, as one of its spokesmen is reported to have rather rashly promised, it will probably not be many years before it achieves this feat. In a report to the Secretary of War, General Arnold stated that the design of true spaceships is all but practicable to-day, and that research will bring them into being in the foreseeable future. This is a broad enough hint to the rest of the world, and behind it one can see the influence of the technicians from Peenemunde who were captured by the Western Allies in the Spring of 1945.

An attempt to construct a philosophy of astronautics is therefore far from premature: it is, if anything, a little belated. In the last few years we have seen the political and ethical chaos produced when a great technical development comes into a world which is unprepared for it. Perhaps it is already too late to redeem past follies: if so, this discussion is rather academic. But if our civilisation is to have a future, then we must see that it does not repeat its earlier mistakes. One of the most important works an organisation such as the British Interplanetary Society can do is to make the world consider seriously the implications of interplanetary travel, so that its advent is not an overwhelming mental shock but something fully anticipated. I do not suggest that lawyers need start worrying immediately about the ownership of the Moon, but the ownership of space is already a matter of acute practical importance. If a country A fires experimental rockets across its neighbour B, what does B do? The air above B is admittedly its own property, but how far does that jurisdiction extend? There must certainly be some equivalent of the three-mile limit, otherwise, in the course of a day, every country will lay claim to a large portion of the Universe!

The ideals of astronautics are new, but the motives and impulses underlying them are as old as the human race. This fact is overlooked by those who criticise our movement, and has equally been overlooked by many who have attempted to defend it against attack. There was a time—not long ago—when the question we were always being asked was “How?” Even before the war that query could be answered in general terms, but there had been no

large-scale engineering achievement to support the claims put forward. It is amusing to recall that in those days—which now seem so remote—there were many people who refused to believe that a rocket could work in a vacuum or would ever be able to rise more than a few miles from the Earth.

Times have certainly changed. The power of the rocket has been demonstrated, only too thoroughly. “How?” is a question of which we are no longer afraid: the query which is much more difficult to answer is “Why?” In the past we usually talked glibly of the colossal scientific discoveries which would follow upon the conquest of space, and then made our getaway beneath a cloud of high-sounding rhetoric. Listen, for example, to this extract from an early B.I.S. leaflet:

“Looking out across immensity to the great suns and circling planets, to worlds of infinite mystery and promise, can you believe that Man is to spend all his days cooped and crawling on the surface of this tiny Earth—this moist pebble with its clinging film of air? Or do you, on the other hand, believe that his destiny is indeed among the stars, and that one day our descendants will bridge the seas of space?”

Now, I am not trying to make fun of that quotation—though as its author I have a perfect right to do so. The viewpoint it represents is an absolutely legitimate one, and I shall return to it later. But the real reason why we wish to cross space has nothing to do with the destiny of man, whatever that may be. It is something at once simpler yet ultimately beyond analysis, for it brings us up against the motives underlying all human conduct.

Some men compose music or spend their lives trying to catch and hold forever the last colours of the dying day, or a pattern of clouds that through all eternity will not come again. Others make voyages of exploration across the world, while some make equally momentous journeys in quiet studies with no more equipment than pencil and paper. If you asked these men the purpose of their music, their painting, their exploring or their mathematics, they would probably say that they hoped to increase the beauty or the knowledge in the world. That answer would be true, and yet misleading. Very few indeed would give the simpler, more fundamental reason that they had no choice in the matter—that what they did, they did because they must.



So, if we will be honest with ourselves, it is with us. Any "reasons" we may give for wanting to cross space are afterthoughts, excuses tacked on because we feel we ought, rationally, to have them. They are true, but superfluous—except for the practical value they may have when we try to enlist the support of those who may not share our particular enthusiasm for astronautics yet can appreciate the benefits which it may bring, and the repercussions these will have upon the causes for which they, too, feel deeply.

The urge to explore, to discover, to "follow knowledge like a sinking star," is a primary human impulse which needs and can receive no further justification than its own existence. The search for knowledge, said a modern Chinese philosopher, is a form of play. Very well: we want to play with spaceships.

All this, you may say, is not very helpful to those who are trying to convince their friends that there is something in this interplanetary business. However, it is not hard to think of endless and entirely valid "practical" reasons—excuses, if you like—why we should wish to cross space, and some of these we will discuss later. There is no doubt that eventually sheer necessity would bring about the conquest of the other planets. I do not believe it is possible to have a virile, steadily advancing culture limited to a single world, and taking the long term—the very long term—view, we know that our Earth will one day become uninhabitable.

In his book, *The Life and Death of the Sun*, the physicist George Gamow points out that, before its evolution has finished, our sun will become a hundred times as luminous as it is to-day. I am glad to see that he draws the obvious conclusion and visualises the migration of humanity to the outer planets before Earth's oceans have begun to boil.

But the human race will not wait until it is kicked out. Long before the sun's radiation has shown any measurable increase, Man will have explored all the Solar system and, like a cautious bather testing the temperature of the sea, will be making breathless little forays into the abyss which separates him from the stars.

To support my thesis, I now have to develop some sort of time-scale. I do this with the greatest misgivings, for prophecy is a dangerous and thankless business, frequently fatal to those who

practise it. We have, however, learned by past experience that even the most extravagant forecast seldom overtakes the truth. H. G. Wells once wrote—and was no doubt laughed to scorn for his folly—that the aeroplane might have some influence upon warfare by 1950. Even Wells never imagined that by that date aircraft would not only have become of supreme importance but would have been challenged by still newer weapons.

Another cautious prophet is fortunately still with us. In *Possible Worlds* (published, I believe, in 1927) Professor J. B. S. Haldane placed interplanetary travel in A.D. 8,000,000 or so. Writing to the British Interplanetary Society just before the war, he used the phrase “the next few thousand years.” I cannot help thinking that to-day he would be inclined to employ once again that correcting factor of  $10^{-3}$ .

Every major country in the world is conducting rocket research, or will soon be doing so. The British Government is setting up a 1,000-mile-long range in Central Australia: every week the Americans are firing off V2's loaded to the scuppers with cosmic ray telescopes, Geiger counters and anything else that occurs to them—and carrying, of course, the inevitable paintings of Hollywood cuties. When the war ended, the most advanced rocket project was the German A.9-A.10 combination, with a range of 3,000 miles, a payload of 1 ton and a top speed of 8,000 m.p.h.—a third of the velocity needed to escape from Earth. There is no doubt whatsoever that smaller, radio-controlled rockets capable of reaching the Moon can be built with the techniques that exist to-day, though the design of man-carrying machines capable of making a safe landing and returning to Earth is immensely more difficult.

The first guided missile to reach the Moon will probably crash into it around 1950. The public, not realising the problems still to be faced, will expect human beings to follow in a very short time. It will be disappointed. During the subsequent years there will be innumerable short-range flights beyond the atmosphere by man-carrying ships reaching heights of a few thousand miles—and, as I mentioned earlier, raising all sorts of pretty legal problems. But if we have to rely on chemical fuels, it may well require at least twenty years of further experimenting before the first true spaceship lands upon the Moon and returns to Earth.

That brings us up to the 1970's. Any chemically-fuelled spaceships will be unwieldy, fabulously expensive beasts with fuel consumptions measured by the thousand tons for a single voyage. Only a few countries will be able to build them and they will be of scientific value only. There will be no question, for a very long time, of colonisation or voyages to the other planets. But—and it is a very large but—any prophet would indeed be rash if he based his predictions upon the use of chemical fuels alone.

Here, as in other fields, the great question-mark is atomic energy. In theory, a few pounds of uranium could take a ship weighing many tons to the Moon and back. In practice, we have not the faintest idea how this could be done. It seems possible that some form of enriched, high-temperature pile could be developed to accelerate a working fluid such as hydrogen, helium or some other gas of low molecular weight and so give a propulsive jet. The solution may be very simple: it may come at any time: *it may have come already*.

The application of atomic energy to aircraft propulsion is an exceedingly difficult problem, but it is the one which will pay the greatest dividends. The cost of the fuel is only a small part of the price of electric energy, and we can easily do without atomic power-stations for a good many years to come. But an atomic aeroplane, capable of unlimited ranges, would be quite another proposition and would revolutionise air transport. Even if the plant and its shielding weighed fifty tons (and there were only six tons of metal in the first Chicago pile) the price would still be worth it to obtain a built-in fuel supply for very large aircraft.

There is no doubt that those concerned fully realise this fact, and we may expect intensive and highly unadvertised research into atomic propulsion for aircraft and rockets. In the United States, it has already been announced that the Fairchild concern has received a government contract for such an investigation.

The race is already under way. Possibly, as I have remarked before, the little radio-controlled chemical rocket, with a payload of only a few pounds, will be the first to reach the Moon. The giant chemically-powered spaceship may never be developed—just as the steam-driven aeroplane was never built, though it might well have been had the petrol engine not come when it did.

Atomic power is hardly likely to advance the conquest of space by more than ten years, but it may make it a really practical proposition almost from the beginning, which otherwise would certainly not have been the case. What is equally important, it will mean that the whole Solar system, and not merely the Moon, will be immediately accessible to Man. It requires relatively little power to reach the other planets if the journey begins from the Moon, but the most economical voyages involve months or even years of "coasting" along orbits curving halfway round the sun. With atomic power these journeys could be cut to a fraction of the time. For example, the "cheapest" journey to Mars—as far as fuel is concerned—lasts 258 days. With an atomic ship, travelling by a more direct route at quite a moderate speed, it need take only two or three weeks.

The last quarter of this century will be an age of exploration such as Man has never known. Before the year 2000 most of the major bodies in the Solar system will probably have been reached, but it will take centuries to examine them all in any detail. Those who seem to think that the Moon is the goal of interplanetary travel should remember that the Solar system contains eight other planets, at least thirty moons and some thousands of asteroids. The total area of the major bodies is about 250 times that of the Earth, though the four giant planets probably do not possess stable surfaces on which landings could be made. Nevertheless, that still leaves an area ten times as great as all the continents of the Earth—without counting the asteroids, which comprise a sort of irregular infinite series I do not propose to try to sum.

This, then, is the future which lies before us, if our civilisation survives the diseases of its childhood. It is a future which some may find terrifying, as no doubt our ancestors found the hostile emptiness of the great oceans. But the men who built our world crossed those oceans, and overcame those fears. If we fail before the same test, then our race will have begun its slide into decadence. Remember, too, that when Drake and Raleigh set sail into the unknown they said goodbye for years to their homes and everything they knew. Our children will face no such loneliness. When they are amongst the outermost planets, when Earth is lost in the glare of the sun and the sun itself is no more than the bright-

est of the stars, they will still be able to hear its voice and to send their own words in a few hours back to the world of men.

I shall mention no more dates, but here is one rather striking thought. Orville Wright, the first man to fly in a heavier-than-air machine, is now in the middle seventies. If he lives to be as old—for want of a better word—as George Bernard Shaw, he will see at least the beginnings of the conquest of space.

I intend now to consider the effects that interplanetary travel must have upon human institutions and ideas. The most obvious and direct result of the crossing of space will be a revolution in almost all branches of science. I will not attempt to list more than a few of the discoveries we may make when we can set up research stations and observatories upon the other planets. One can never predict the outcome of any scientific investigation, and the greatest discoveries of all—the ones which will most influence human life—may come from sciences as yet unborn.

Astronomy and physics will, of course, be the fields of knowledge most immediately affected. In both these sciences there are whole areas where research has come to a dead end, or has never even started, because our terrestrial environment makes it impossible.

The atmosphere, which on a clear winter night looks so transparent, is in reality a coloured filter blocking all rays beyond the ultra-violet. Even in the visible spectrum the light that struggles through the shifting strata above our heads is so distorted that the images it carries dance and tremble in the field of the telescope.

An observatory on the Moon, working with quite small instruments, would be many times as effective as one on Earth. Far greater magnifications could be used, and far longer exposures employed. In addition, the low gravity would make relatively simple the building of larger telescopes than have ever been constructed on this planet.

In physics and chemistry, access to vacua of unlimited extent will open up quite new fields of investigation. The electronic scientist may well look forward to the day when he can build radio tubes a mile long, if he wishes, merely by setting up his electrodes in the open! It is also interesting to speculate whether we may not learn more about gravity when we can escape partially or wholly from its influence.

The prospect of building stations in space, circling the Earth like tiny moons in orbits beyond the atmosphere, is one that has a peculiar fascination. Such stations were first proposed as refueling depots for spaceships, but even if that need never arises they would have other most important applications. Meteorological observatories in space could see at a glance the weather over half the planet, could watch in detail the movement of storms and rain areas. Few people, particularly in these islands, would deny the immediate practical importance of this! Indeed, really accurate forecasting may have to wait until we can get the meteorologists out into space.

The space-station has one other application of very great importance, for as I have pointed out elsewhere it could provide a very simple and economical means of world-wide television broadcasting. As is well known, the reliable range of a television transmitter extends barely beyond the horizon. A dozen stations, at least, would be needed to cover a country as small as Britain, and a world service would be completely out of the question. Yet three repeater stations circling the Earth could provide a steady, reliable service from Pole to Pole with little more power output than the present London transmitter.

But the first direct results of astronautics may be less important than its indirect consequences. This has proved true in the past of many great scientific achievements. Copernican astronomy, Darwin's theory of evolution, Freudian psychology—these had few immediate practical results but their effect on human thought was tremendous.

We may expect the same of astronautics. With the expansion of the world's mental horizons may come one of the greatest outbursts of creative activity ever known. The parallel with the Renaissance is very striking, and I would like to take it further had I the time and the training. "In human records," wrote the anthropologist J. D. Unwin, "there is no trace of any display of productive energy which has not been preceded by a display of expansive energy. Although the two kinds of energy must be carefully distinguished, in the past they have been . . . united in the sense that one has developed out of the other." Unwin continues with this quotation from Sir James Frazer: "Intellectual progress,

which reveals itself in the growth of art and science . . . receives an immense impetus from conquest and empire." Interplanetary travel is the only form of "conquest and empire" now compatible with civilisation. Without it, the human mind, compelled to circle forever in its planetary goldfish bowl, must eventually stagnate.

We all know the narrow, limited type of mind which is interested in nothing beyond its town or village, and bases all its judgements on those parochial standards. We are slowly—perhaps too slowly—evolving from that mentality towards a world outlook. Few things will do more to accelerate that evolution than the conquest of space. It is not easy to see how the more extreme forms of nationalism can long survive when men begin to see Earth in its true perspective as a single small globe among the stars.

There is, of course, the possibility that as soon as space is crossed all the great powers will join in a race to claim as much territory as their ships can reach. So far, I am glad to say, there has been no interplanetary flag-waving in Britain. But though Imperialism (in the worst sense of the word) is dying in this country, by a strange irony of fate it shows signs of revival on the other side of the Atlantic. "It has been suggested," we read in the *Observer*, "that if the United States wants to be the 'Number One' power of the atomic age it must occupy the Moon with man-carrying rockets." I do not think we need take this sort of sixteenth-century buccaneering too seriously, but it represents a threat which it would be unwise to ignore. The menace of interplanetary imperialism can be overcome only by world-wide technical and political agreements well in advance of the actual event, and these will require continual pressure and guidance from the organisations which have studied the subject. Whether we like it or not—and most of us probably won't—we will sooner or later find ourselves lobbying as energetically, and I hope as effectively, as the American atomic scientists. Let us therefore get our own ideas fully organised before we too stand blinking in the sunlight amid the ruins of our ivory towers.

The Solar system is rather a large place, though whether it will be large enough for so quarrelsome an animal as *Homo sapiens* remains to be seen. But it is surely reasonable to hope that the crossing of space will have a considerable effect in reducing the psychological pressures and tensions of our present world. Much

depends, of course, on the habitability of the other planets. I do not expect that very large populations will, at least for many centuries, be able to subsist outside the Earth. There may be no worlds in the Solar system upon which men can live without mechanical aids, and some of the greatest achievements of future engineering will be concerned with shaping hostile environments to human needs.

We must not, however, commit the mistake of equating mere physical expansion, or even increasing scientific knowledge, with "progress"—however that may be defined. Only little minds are impressed by sheer size and number. There would be no virtue in possessing the Universe if it brought neither wisdom nor happiness. Yet possess it we must, at least in spirit, if we are ever to answer the questions which men have asked in vain since history began.

Perhaps analogy will make my meaning clearer. Picture a small island inhabited by a race which has not yet learned the art of making ships. Looking out across the ocean this people can see many other islands, some much the same as its own but most clearly very different. From some of these islands, it is rumoured, the smoke of fires has been seen ascending—though whether those fires are the work of men no-one can say.

Now these islanders are very thoughtful people, and writers of many books with such resounding titles as: *The Nature of the Universe*, *The Meaning of Life, Mind and Reality*, and so on. Whilst admiring their enterprise, I do not think we should take their conclusions very seriously—at least until they have gone a little further afield than their own coral reef. Said the last Poet Laureate:

Wisdom will repudiate thee, if you think to enquire  
WHY things are as they are or whence they came; thy task  
is first to learn WHAT IS.

That task the human race can scarcely begin to undertake while it is still Earthbound.

Every thoughtful man has often asked himself: is our race the only intelligence in the universe, or are there other, perhaps far



higher, forms of life elsewhere? There can be few questions more important than this, for upon its outcome may depend all philosophy—yes, and all religion too.

The first discovery of planets revolving round other suns, which was made in that *annus mirabilis* 1942, has changed all ideas of the plurality of worlds. Planets are far commoner than we had believed: there may be thousands of millions in this Galaxy alone. Few men to-day would care to argue that Earth must be the only abode of life in the whole of space.

It is true—it is even likely—that we may encounter no other intelligence in the Solar system. That contact may have to wait for the day, perhaps ages hence, when we can reach the stars. But sooner or later it must come.

There have been many portrayals in literature of these fateful meetings. Most science-fiction writers, with characteristic lack of imagination, have used them as an excuse for stories of conflict and violence indistinguishable from those which stain the pages of our own history. Possibly because I was never trained in what are laughingly called the humanities, I do not believe that war must inevitably arise from contact between Mankind and other races, if such there be.

Remember the penny and the postage stamp that Sir James Jeans balanced on Cleopatra's needle. The obelisk represented the age of the world, the penny the whole duration of man's existence and the stamp the length of time in which he has been slightly civilised. The period during which life will be possible on Earth corresponds to a column of stamps hundreds of yards—perhaps a mile—in height.

Thinking of this picture, we see how extremely improbable it is that the question of interplanetary warfare can ever arise. Any races we encounter will almost certainly be subhuman or superhuman—more likely the latter, since ours must surely be one of the youngest cultures in the Universe. Only if we score a bullseye on that one stamp in the mile-high column will we meet a race at a level of technical development sufficiently near our own for conflict to be possible.

But if the Universe does hold species so greatly in advance of our own, then why have they never visited Earth? There is one very simple answer to this question. Let us suppose that such

ances exist: let us even suppose that, never having heard of Einstein, they can pass from one end of the Galaxy to the other as quickly as they please.

That will help them less than one might think. In ten minutes, a man may walk along a beach—but in his whole lifetime he could not examine every grain of sand upon it. For all we know, there may be fleets of survey ships diligently charting and recharting the Universe. Even making the most optimistic assumptions, it is hardly likely that our world would have been visited in the few thousand years of recorded history.

Perhaps, even at this moment, there is in some rather large filing system a complete report on this planet, with maps which to us would look distorted but still recognisable. That report would show that though Earth was teeming with life, it had no dominant species. However, certain social insects showed considerable promise, and the file might end with the note: "Intelligence may be emerging on this planet. Suggest that intervals between surveys be reduced to 100,000 years."

Very well, you may ask, suppose we encounter beings who judge, condemn and execute us as dispassionately, and with as little effort, as we spray a pool of mosquito larvae with DDT? I must admit that the possibility exists, and the logical answer—that their reasons will no doubt be excellent—is somewhat lacking in appeal. However, the prospect seems remote. I do not believe that any culture can advance, for more than a few centuries at a time, on a technological front alone. Morals and ethics must not lag behind science, otherwise the social system will breed poisons which will cause its certain destruction. I believe therefore that with superhuman knowledge must go equally great compassion and tolerance. In this I may be utterly wrong: the future may yet belong to forces which we should call cruel and evil. Whatever we may hope, we cannot be certain that human aspirations and ideals have universal validity. This we can discover in one way only, and the philosophical mind will be willing to pay the price of knowledge.

I have mentioned before how limited our picture of the Universe must be so long as we are confined to this Earth alone. But the story does not end here. Our impressions of reality are de-

terminated, perhaps more than we imagine, by the senses through which we make contact with the external world. How utterly different our cosmologies would have been had Nature economised with us, as she has done with other creatures, and given us eyes incapable of seeing the stars! Yet how pitifully limited are the eyes we do possess, tuned as they are to a single octave in an endless spectrum! This room in which we are gathered is drenched with radiations, from the microwaves which we have just detected as emanating from sun and stars, to the cosmic rays whose origin is still one of the prime mysteries of modern physics. These things we have discovered within the last generation, and we cannot guess what still lies beneath the threshold of the senses—though recent discoveries in paranormal psychology hint that the search may be only beginning.

The races of other worlds will have senses and philosophies very different from our own. To recall Plato's famous analogy, we are prisoners in a cave, gathering our impressions of the outside world from shadows thrown upon the walls. We may never escape to reach that outer reality, but one day we may hope to meet other prisoners in adjoining caves, whose shadows will be very different from ours and from whom we may learn more than we could ever do by our own unaided efforts.

These are deep waters, and it is time to turn back to the shore, to leave the distant dream for the present reality of combustion-chamber pressures, servo-control mechanisms and cotangential orbits. Yet I make no apology for discussing these remote vistas at some length, if only to show the triviality of the viewpoint which regards astronautics as a schoolboy adventure of no more real value than the scaling of some hitherto inaccessible mountain. The adventure is there, it is true, and that is good in itself—but it is only a small part of a much greater whole.

Not so short-sighted, but equally false, is the view expressed by the Oxford theologian C. S. Lewis, who has written of would-be astronauts in this unflattering fashion: "The destruction or enslavement of other species in the Universe, if such there are, is to these minds a welcome corollary." Mr. Lewis's ideas appear to have been culled in the cloisters of Magdalen College from a perusal of the pages of "Staggering Stories"—not, I think, evidence upon which any jury would convict. There is certainly no

sign of such an outlook in British astronautics, and, as I have already shown, a race such as ours, which has only possessed steam-power for a century and a half, is not likely to have a chance of enslaving any other species it may encounter.

Yet, in case there are any to whom such a prospect appeals, I would point out that Empires—like atomic bombs—are self-liquidating assets. Dominance by force leads to revolution, which in the long run, even if indirectly, must be successful. Humane government leads eventually to self-determination and equality, as the classic case of the British Empire has shown and is still showing. Commonwealths alone can be stable and enduring, but Empires must always contain the seeds of their own dissolution.

The desire to give a comprehensive picture of the outcome of astronautics has compelled me to range—not unwillingly—over an enormous field. However, I do not wish anyone to think that the possibilities we have been discussing need come in this century, or the next, or the next. . . . Yet any of them may arise, at any time, as soon as the first ships begin to leave the Earth. Man's first contact with other intelligent races may lie as far away in time as the building of the Pyramids—or it may be as near as the discovery of X-rays. But prophecy is almost always conservative, and on the whole it is better to be too early in one's anticipations than too late.

Of this, at least, we may be fairly certain. Barring accidents—the most obvious of which I need not specify—the exploration of the planets will be in full swing as this century draws to its close. To examine them in any detail, and to exploit their possibilities fully, will take hundreds of years. But Man being what he is, when his first ship circles down into the frozen wastes of Pluto, his mind will already be bridging the gulf still lying between him and the stars.

Interplanetary distances are a million times as great as those to which we are accustomed in everyday life, but interstellar distances are a million-fold greater still. Before them even light is a hopeless laggard, taking years to pass from one star to its neighbour. How Man will face this challenge I do not know: but face it one day he will. Professor Bernal was, I believe, the first to suggest that one solution might lie in the use of artificial planets,

little self-contained worlds embarking upon journeys which would last for generations. Olaf Stapledon has expanded this theme in one of the greatest of his fantasies, but the thought of these tiny bubbles of life, creeping from star to star on their age-long journeys, carrying whole populations doomed never to set foot upon any planet, never to know the passage of the seasons or even the interchange of night and day, is one from which most minds will recoil in horror. However, those who make these journeys will have outlooks very different from our own, and to them such voyages may be great and glorious adventures.

Yet perhaps, after all, the velocity of light is not an absolute limit that can never be surpassed. During the war I often found it rather tantalising to think that the electromagnetic field patterns moving up and down sundry copper tubes in my keeping were doing so at one and a half times the speed of light—and could even reach an infinite velocity if some careless mechanic upset the adjustments. There was, of course, a catch in this, as anyone who has had dealings with wave-guides will know. Still, the fact remains that at least three “phenomena” in the physical world can attain unlimited speeds, and, indeed, are incapable of travelling as slowly as light.<sup>1</sup>

These speculations, intriguing though they are, will hardly concern Mankind in this century. We may, I think, confidently expect that it will be a hundred years at least before confinement to the Solar system produces very marked signs of claustrophobia.

We have gone as far as is possible, at this moment of time, in trying to assess the impact of astronautics upon human affairs. I am not unmindful of the fact that fifty years from now, instead of preparing for the conquest of the outer planets, our grandchildren may be dispossessed savages clinging to the fertile oases in a radio-active wilderness. Yet we must keep the problems of to-day in their true proportions. They are of vital—indeed, of supreme—importance, since they can destroy our civilisation and slay the future before its birth. But if we survive them, they will pass into history and the time will come when they will be as

<sup>1</sup> The other two being light when moving through a metal of refractive index  $< 1$ , and the de Broglie waves associated with an electron, whose speed  $= c^2/v$  where  $v$  is the velocity of the electron. The same equation applies in the case of the field patterns quoted above,  $v$  then being the speed at which the *signal* moves along the wave-guide.

little remembered as the causes of the Punic Wars. The crossing of space—even the sense of its imminent achievement in the years before it comes—may do much to turn men's minds outward and away from their present tribal squabbles. In this sense the rocket, far from being one of the destroyers of civilisation, may provide the safety-valve that is needed to preserve it.

I would like to emphasise this point, which may be of the utmost importance. By providing an outlet for man's exuberant and adolescent energies, astronautics may make a truly vital contribution to the problems of the present world. Space-flight does not even have to be achieved for this to happen. As soon as there is a general belief in its ultimate possibility, that belief will begin to colour men's psychological outlook. This is particularly true of the active—even aggressive—minds of those peoples, such as the Americans, British and Russians, for whom the problem is most acute. In many ways, the very dynamic qualities of astronautics are in tune with the restless, expansive mood of our age.

In this talk I have tried to show that the future development of mankind, on the spiritual no less than the material plane, is bound up with the conquest of space. To what may be called—using the words in the widest sense—the liberal scientific mind, I believe these arguments to be unanswerable. The only real criticism that may be raised against them is the quantitative one that the world is not yet ready for such changes. It is hard not to sympathise with this view, which may be correct, but I have given my reasons for thinking otherwise.

There are, of course, a great many people who regard the whole subject of interplanetary travel with distaste or even with hostility, believing it to be inherently bad. If they still retain those convictions I do not propose to argue further with them: they are welcome to their beliefs and we will part with polite if slightly frigid bows. Yet I think we should expect support both from our friends and from our enemies, since the latter may reasonably hope that when we have departed into space we shall leave them at last in peace.

The future of which we have spoken is now being shaped by men taking instrument readings amid the roar and scream of harnessed jets, by men building up circuits in quiet laboratories, by men with calculating machines in offices and studies all over

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## BIOLOGY

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### SPECIES AND EVOLUTION

by JULIAN S. HUXLEY

WHEN Darwin wrote his great work, he called it the *Origin of Species* because that was then the crux of evolution. Either species were fixed and permanent in their characters, as they had been created in the beginning 'each after their kind,' in which case evolution was ruled out; or they could change into quite different types, in which case evolution must be accepted.

Today the position is entirely different. Evolution is generally accepted as a fact; we know that species change. Biologists are now trying to discover what they can about the different modes of evolution, the different kinds of species, and the different ways in which they may originate.

A main distinction which has emerged is between long-term trends on the one hand, leading usually to an improvement of general type, and short-term diversification on the other. The difference between the two can be illustrated from any modern mammalian type. The horse stock, for instance, showed a steady increase in efficiency of hoofs and of grinding teeth throughout tens of millions of years. That was a long-term trend. But today the horse, the zebras, and the asses merely ring minor changes on the general perfected equine plan, and in every epoch the type was diversified into many different species, all at approximately the same level of the main trend.

What is a species? In one sense it is just a group of similar animals or plants which it has been agreed to distinguish by means

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of a Latin name. Thus the birds popularly called Lesser Redpolls are assigned to the species *Carduelis flammea*, *Carduelis* being the name of the genus, *flammea* of one of the species within it. But this assigning of specific names is not merely arbitrary. Species are also natural groups, which can usually be defined by a combination of the following criteria. First, their members inhabit a geographical area which is in accord with the idea of a single common origin for the whole. Secondly, they either interbreed, or are potentially capable of interbreeding, with each other. Thirdly, they possess certain distinctive common characters. Fourthly, they usually do not interbreed with other specific groups, or, if they do so, fertility is reduced.

There are exceptions to all these criteria; they have different weight in different forms; and there are borderline cases where evolution has taken a group half-way to specific distinctness. We must expect a compromise between the human need for pigeon-holing facts and the variety and fluidity of nature. Yet in well-worked groups there is remarkable agreement as to what should be called species. Thus in birds, Ernst Mayr estimates that fewer than 1 per cent. of the thousands of named species are doubtful or disputable.

The extent of the species problem can be realized when we discover that something like a million species of animals have already been named, and that new discovery is still adding to the list, and at an increasing, not a decreasing, rate.

However, more interesting than semi-philosophical disputes about definitions are the investigations which are showing how groups actually vary in nature and how biological discontinuities arise in them, and may be accentuated.<sup>1</sup>

Let us first look at diversification within species. I spoke earlier of the Lesser Redpoll. This breeds in Britain and much of central Europe. In northern Europe, and also in Siberia and Canada, the breeding redpolls, though very similar, are definitely paler and a little bigger: their popular name is Mealy Redpoll. In Greenland they are still larger, but not so pale as the Mealy. These three geographical groups are too alike to be called species; they are

<sup>1</sup> The species problem is still fluid. A brief essay such as this inevitably fails to do justice to the complexity of nature, or to take account of various points of view held by other biologists.



therefore called *subspecies*, and given a third name—the Lesser Redpoll is *Carduelis flammea cabaret*; the Mealy is *C. f. flammea*; and the Greenland is *C. f. rostrata*. Another set of high northern redpolls is quite definitely distinct, in having an unstriped white rump and belly. It is therefore assigned to a different species, *C. hornemanni*.

Distinct forms on islands cannot interbreed freely with their neighbours; but when they are so similar that they can be presumed to be capable of fertile crossing, they also are called subspecies. Thus in Britain, the wrens on St. Kilda are uniformly larger, heavier-billed, and with more barring than those of the mainland.

In the diversification of species by geography, several different factors are at work. There is on the one hand adaptation to local conditions; on the other there is the effect of isolation, which allows much more rapid divergence of groups; and there is the size of the group—in isolated small populations non-adaptive 'accidental' changes may become established.

With regard to the species of North American Deermouse, *Peromyscus polionotus*, Sumner has given us some very interesting facts from Florida. On an isolated reef of white sand, a distinct, almost white, subspecies is found. The coastal strip, about 35 miles wide, has lightish sandy soil and is inhabited by a moderately pale subspecies. The inland area has heavy dark soil, with a dark subspecies, its colour nicely adapted to that of the soil. The white form is a protective adaptation to the white sand. But its origin has been made possible by breeding isolation; for on the equally white beach of the mainland shore, the mice are merely rather paler than further inland.

Where the pale and dark mainland subspecies meet, there is a belt, only a few miles wide, where the average colour changes very rapidly from pale to dark. But besides this change in average, there is to be noted a sharp increase in variability. This can only mean that two distinct types here interbreed, with resultant recombination of characters. There is clearly a general adaptation of both the subspecies to soil colour. In addition, it seems that each is 'internally adapted,' through the development of its own distinctive complex of genes, or hereditary units, making for vigour, fertility, and so on. When two such gene-complexes are

crossed, most of the recombinations will be less well-adjusted, and their spread will be discouraged by natural selection; this will keep the hybrid zone narrow.

There are two complications. The coastal form seems to have expanded recently on to the edge of the dark inland soil, along the seaward side of which there is a narrow belt of white sand. Thus so far as colour goes, selection will be making the coastal form paler on one margin, darker on the other, and a gradient of characters (or 'cline' as it has been called) is the result.

Quite a number of birds and mammals show this general feature of stabilized subspecies remaining fairly constant over comparatively large regions, and being separated by narrow belts in which the character changes rapidly.

There are other cases where the inhabitants of a continuous area differ in different parts of it sufficiently to warrant being called subspecies, but no sharp steps, no narrow intergrading zones, have been found. This may sometimes be due to insufficiency of facts—as more specimens accumulate and the steps are looked for, they will turn out to be there after all. But nature is almost perversely varied, and sometimes continuous slight variation seems to operate over very large stretches. This is true for the sharp-tailed grouse over the great plains of North America.

In regard to plants, botanists generally prefer to use the word *ecotype* to denote the lower units of which species are made up. The primary meaning is a form or group adapted to a particular set of environmental conditions. It was the Swedish botanist Turesson who first gave currency to the term. For instance, in the grass *Poa alpina* in Scandinavia, he showed that there were three distinguishable ecotypes, from alpine, subalpine, and lowland habitats. These differ in various visible ways, but also in more important ecological characters, such as water-requirements and time of flowering. The basic differences are hereditary.

Sometimes the ecotypes are just like subspecies in higher animals. Thus a team of Californian botanists, under the leadership of Clausen, has been growing ecotypes of various plant species at experimental stations at various heights. To take one example, the potentilla, *P. glandulosa*, has a well-marked climatic ecotype in the Coast Range, and another in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

The two are separated geographically and are obvious subspecies. When we get higher up in the Sierra, however, things become rather different. After a certain altitude a hill-meadow ecotype overlaps with the foothill form. However, even in the overlap zone the two are kept separate by their ecological requirements: the foothill form is practically restricted to the dry hillsides, the higher one to moist meadows.

Gregor in Scotland has described an extension of this kind of arrangement in the common sea-plaintain, *Plantago maritima*. In many areas, there is a steady gradation from waterlogged, salty mud to dry, less maritime conditions. The plantains then also show a corresponding gradation in various characters—average height, for example, ranging from about 20 cm. to nearly 50 cm. The evidence goes to show that the environment seems to act as a sieve. A great range of different ecotypes must be produced, but they are sifted out by their requirements, so that even a rapid gradation in the environment is reflected in a gradation in the plant's characters: ecotype here is therefore quite different from subspecies.

To return to the Californian potentilla, it was found that, at still greater heights, there were a subalpine and an alpine ecotype. The one was taller and later-flowering, the other definitely dwarfish and early-flowering. But in this case the two ecotypes grade gradually into each other over a belt of considerable width.

These examples will show some of the complexities of the picture. Very broadly, we may say that the species of higher animals tend to be divisible into geographical sub-groups, those of higher plants into ecological or habitat sub-groups, though there are exceptions, and though broad ecological adaptation will often coincide with geographical separation. The difference, so far as it is real, is presumably related to the more random methods of fertilization and of dispersal in the plants, which facilitate sifting by habitat.

It is when isolation is at work that the divergence of groups can, and often does, become accentuated. This is true both for the formation of subspecies and for full species. In addition, small populations, as Professor Sewall Wright has shown, are liable to what we may call evolutionary accident. In them, many old genes

may die out entirely, and useless (or even deleterious) mutations or gene-combinations may become fixed, owing to mere chance.

A pretty example of this comes from lizards on the Adriatic. Sinking of the coast has isolated lizard populations on a number of islands. As we might expect, the degree of difference of the island populations from the mainland form increases roughly with the time they have been separated (as measured by the depth of water between island and mainland). But it also does so with decrease in the size of the island, and therefore of the size of the population.

Similarly, Dr. Uvarov tells me that quite small groups of flightless grasshoppers which occur in isolated patches in arid regions may be sharply distinct from each other.

Quite apart from the size of population, isolation encourages diversification. An excellent example is the little Malayan Mouse-deer. This is represented by a single subspecies of uniform type over the whole of Sumatra and Borneo; but on the islands of the Rhio Linga archipelago, with less than 1/150th of the area, no fewer than seven distinct subspecies have evolved.

Not merely subspecies but obviously full species may develop through isolation. Thus in Britain, our red grouse is clearly derived from the same stock as the willow grouse of continental Europe. Yet it differs not merely in such minor features as its dark wing-feathers, but in not changing colour to white in winter. It is accordingly ranked as a distinct species, with the name *Lagopus scoticus*. It is interesting that no other British bird has reached more than subspecific difference.

This seems to be due to lack of time, for, on old archipelagoes, the process may go further. Mayr illustrates this from the Barking Pigeons (*Ducula*) in the Pacific.

Once isolation has allowed the evolution of distinct forms which will not interbreed, these species may spread out and come to overlap in their distribution, instead of replacing each other in different geographical areas like mere subspecies. The two forms generally differ somewhat in adaptation and way of life. Thus our closely related willow-warbler and chiffchaff now live side by side in Britain, but are adapted to somewhat different habitats. There has been a real diversification of the original leaf-

warbler type—though where the original separation occurred we do not know.

When combined isolation and diversification continue for long periods, we can sometimes see genera and families being evolved. A single group may radiate out in many directions, which are often adaptive, though more or less accidental differences also occur. The classical case of this is provided by the groundfinches of the Galapagos archipelago. They are classical because they were one of the chief reason which forced Darwin to believe in evolution.

The Galapagos archipelago comprises some nine larger and a number of smaller volcanic islands. The nearest mainland is the west coast of South America, over 600 miles distant. The groundfinches (*Geospizidae*) are a distinct family, confined to the archipelago (and to Cocos Island): they do not occur on the mainland. The entire family must have arisen from a single pair of some kind of finch accidentally blown out to sea. They have since evolved into five well-marked genera, with nearly 20 species.

Even greater diversification has taken place among the sickle-bill family (*Drepanididae*), confined to the Hawaiian archipelago (and Laysan Island). They have evolved into 18 distinct genera (with some 40 species), including not merely seed-eaters and insect-eaters, but nectar-suckers with special tongues, and a unique 'woodpecker' type (*Heterorhynchus*) which has a long upper mandible adapted to pry away bark, and a short lower mandible for pecking out grubs in the wood. Some authorities consider that they show diversification in more adaptive directions than any other family of birds.

On oceanic archipelagoes, there seems to be another factor at work besides isolation: since the fauna is a very restricted one, being confined to the descendants of comparatively few accidental stragglers, there is less competition. This biological low pressure makes it easier for new adaptive specializations to arise. If there had already been woodpeckers in Hawaii, we can be pretty sure that the woodpecking adaptations of *Heterorhynchus* would not have been evolved.

Something similar appears to happen when enemies are fewer: low predator-pressure may act in the same sort of way as low

competition-pressure. The best example of this comes from the little Cichlid fish of the East African lakes. All these lakes are isolated, and in each there are Cichlid species peculiar to that lake, or *endemics* as the biologist calls them. The big predaceous fish *Lates* and *Hydrocyon* have managed to invade some of these lakes, but not others. Where they are absent and predator-pressure is low, many more endemic species, adapted to more ways of life, have evolved. Apparently new evolutionary ventures do not get the same chance of survival when opposed by the streamlining pressure of powerful enemies.

If such numerous and diverse types have arisen in a continuous body of water, we must suppose that in animals geographical isolation is not the only avenue to achievement of the rank of full species, and that isolation by habit or habitat is also possible. It is difficult to visualize the process, and some authorities refuse to admit it. However, there are certain cases where it seems definitely established. Thus among insects restricted to one or a few food-plants, we may find so-called 'biological races' with different food-preferences. For example, the ermine moth has one race adapted to apples, the other to hawthorn and blackthorn. The apple form usually starts its larval life as a leaf-miner, the other not. Given a choice of food-plants the larvae of both races show an 80 to 90 per cent. preference for their own; and an almost equally high fixation is shown by the female moths in their egg-laying preferences. Caterpillars forced to eat the 'wrong' food give moths which are generally undersized and often infertile. Finally, the mating-preference between males and females of the same race is twice as strong as that between those of different race. Thus, though the two races may coexist in the same area, they are halfway to separation as distinct species. In other insects, this type of divergence has produced full species.

We know that many pests of cultivated plants have arisen through a change in food-preference. For instance, a bug, *Plesioris rugicollis*, which in nature is confined to willows, in 1918 began turning its attention to apples, and later the apple race became quite a pest.

How a species gets on to a new food-plant, we do not know. But once a new source of food has been successfully colonized,

there is some ecological isolation, and the new strain may persist and evolve. For the adults which emerge are 'conditioned,' in the psychologists' phrase, to the smell of the plant they have fed on as larvae, and will often prefer it to the original species. Thorpe has made experiments in flavouring the food of fruit-fly grubs with different chemicals and finds that, even in this more mixed feeder, a considerable conditioning of the adults' egg-laying preferences takes place.

Thorpe's results are a beautiful experimental confirmation of the principle of 'Organic Selection' put forward long ago by Baldwin and by Lloyd Morgan. They suggested that a change of habits, without any inherited alteration, might often be the first step in evolution. The strain would be held, more or less firmly, by its habits in a new niche, until such time as mutation and selection could provide a hereditary constitution adapted to the new environment.

Sometimes when closely related species occupy the same area, the mating barriers between them seem to have been intensified by natural selection. Thus our familiar chiffchaff and willow-warbler are extremely alike in most ways, but differ strikingly in their song (occasionally the chiffchaff will add a warble to its unwarblerlike two notes, indicating that these are a recent acquisition).

Often, however, no such obvious distinctions arise, and only painstaking research will show that what was at one time regarded as a single species is in reality two or more. Thus it was once believed that there existed one species of malaria mosquito in Europe—*Anopheles maculipennis*. Now it turns out that there are at least five or six reproductively isolated groups, i.e. species. These differ hardly or not at all in the adult, and very slightly in the larvae, but can all be distinguished by their egg-floats—in shape, colour, and pattern. They also differ in their habits, in the degree of their tolerance of salt-water, and in their capacity to transmit malaria to man.

Sometimes we can understand just how these almost identical species have come into being. The little brown tree-creepers of Europe really belong to two distinct species. The western, our *Certhia familiaris*, has a rather shorter beak and a longer and less

bent hind-claw, and is slightly lighter-coloured than the eastern *C. brachydactyla*. They overlap over a broad zone in central Europe, but seem never to interbreed. Their distinctness was discovered by C. L. Brehm over a hundred years ago; but most ornithologists refused for some seventy years to believe that two creatures so alike could really be distinct species.

The explanation seems to be as follows. In the glacial period the spread of the ice split the range of the original single creeper species in two. A south-western and a south-eastern group were isolated. In their isolation they became just different enough not to cross. So when the ice finally receded they did not merely spread back again but could overlap without losing their separateness.

Perhaps even more striking are the chains of subspecies which are continuous, yet whose terminal links will not breed with each other. The entire group is one and two species simultaneously—or, if you prefer it, two of its subspecies behave as species when they meet.

When groups re-meet after separation, their divergence may not have proceeded all the way towards full separation, and they will still interbreed. The crows provide an example from our own islands. During the ice age the eastern European group must have evolved the striking pied grey-and-black plumage of the Hoodie, while the Carrion crow of the south-western area stayed black.<sup>2</sup> The two forms have now re-met, and where they meet form a narrow band of hybrids of every type. In Europe the interbreeding zone runs south of the Alps and up to the western Baltic.

In plants, matters are more complicated, for what are undoubtedly quite separate species will not infrequently hybridize easily and give fertile offspring. Thus the purple-flowered lucerne (*Medicago sativa*), imported from Europe as a forage plant in the seventeenth century, seems speedily to have crossed with the indigenous yellow-flowered sickle medick (*M. falcata*). The hybrid has strange greenish-black flowers, is exceedingly variable (doubtless owing to Mendelian recombination), but as a group is more vigorous and fertile than either of its parents. In one region

<sup>2</sup> A third group in south-eastern Asia also remained black.



of France where lucerne has not been artificially kept up, only the hybrid has survived. Here we have a 'hybrid swarm' so distinct as to merit the separate specific name of *M. sylvestris*.

Plants differ from animals in yet another way, namely their much greater tendency to what is known as polyploidy—the reduplication of whole sets of chromosomes. The chromosomes are the carriers of the genes, which are strung out along their length. The entire hereditary constitution is cut up and divided among a number of chromosomes, the number being normally constant for any species. Typically there are two complete sets or packs of chromosomes in each cell of the body; before reproduction, these are sorted out so that each gamete (sexual cell), whether sperm (or pollen-grain) or egg, has one pack only.

The basic number of chromosomes in a single pack is conveniently denoted by  $n$ . The sexual cells will then contain  $n$ , the body cells  $2n$ . Now, sometimes during cell-division the chromosomes may be doubled, but the cell-body fail to divide.<sup>3</sup> All the descendants of this cell will then have double the normal number of chromosomes, or  $4n$ ; and the shoots and flowers so produced will be *tetraploid*, or four-fold in respect of their chromosomes. Doubling seems to be promoted by extreme conditions, notably cold. Such flowers, crossed with normals, will give  $3n$  (triploid) offspring, and these will be sterile, since the chromosomes cannot be distributed to give complete sets in the sexual cells—there will be two of one kind of chromosome, one of another, and the result is a hopeless imbalance. Even if crossed with similar tetraploids, they will have somewhat reduced fertility, since there will be a fair proportion of sexual cells in which division will have distributed three of one kind of chromosome to some cells, and only one to others.

But many plants are capable of non-sexual reproduction—by suckers, bulbils, parthenogenesis, and so forth—and by these means the tetraploids may maintain themselves at first. They are likely to do so, for in difficult conditions they are often hardier than the normal  $2n$  (diploid) type.<sup>4</sup> And, once they are established, selection may adjust various mechanisms of cell-division

<sup>3</sup> Or a gamete may be formed with the unreduced ( $2n$ ) number of chromosomes.

<sup>4</sup> Chromosome-doubling also not infrequently produces an increase of size of the whole plant or of its organs.

to increase their fertility. Triploids, however, will have to rely entirely on non-sexual methods.

Fresh doubling may later occur, giving  $8n$ ,  $16n$ ,  $6n$ ,  $12n$  forms, and so on. Whatever the details of origin, it is a fact that many plants exist in two or more forms which differ primarily in their 'ploidy.' The mountain anemone (*A. montana*), for example, has  $2n$ ,  $4n$ , and  $6n$  strains, practically indistinguishable to look at, but incapable of giving fertile or fully fertile offspring when crossed. There is thus *genetic isolation* within the species. But this may become translated into geographical terms. Thus in the cruciferous plant *Biscutella laevigata*, the original  $2n$  type has been able to survive only in a few isolated areas. The  $4n$  type, which may well have arisen in the first place owing to the cold, was also more cold-resistant and more generally vigorous; it now occupies a large continuous area across Europe, reaching a good deal further north than the  $2n$  type. Sometimes the evidence suggests that the original  $2n$  forms have been wholly unable to compete with the  $4n$ 's, and have simply died out.

Here is quite a new method of diversification. In animals, some degree of genetic isolation may come about through internal rearrangements of bits of the chromosomes (too complex to describe here), and if aided by geographical isolation may lead on to the separation of mutually infertile groups—true species—which will tend to resemble each other very closely.

The most surprising fact about plant evolution, however, is that definite new species can be formed abruptly by the crossing of two other species followed by chromosome-doubling. We may call this convergent species-formation, as opposed to the usual splitting or divergence of one species into two or more.

The classical case is that of *Primula kewensis*, so called because it arose at Kew from a spontaneous cross between two well-known species, *P. verticillata* and *P. floribunda*. It was at first entirely sterile, but after some years of cultivation by cuttings, a single fertile shoot appeared. When examined, this was found to possess 36 chromosomes instead of the 18 of the rest of the plant and of both its ancestors. Before doubling, the hybrid had one pack of chromosomes from each parent. And these were so different that they would not work together properly. But after

doubling, it possessed two complete double packs; and now sexual reproduction with reasonably normal chromosome-pairing and normal development could take place. A tetraploid produced thus is called an allotetraploid, as opposed to the autotetraploids or self-doublers previously considered.

*Primula kewensis* probably owes its survival to human aid. But *Spartina townsendii* shows what may occur. *Spartina stricta* is a European rice-grass of salt-marshes. *S. alterniflora* is an American species whose seeds were accidentally brought over in ships' cargoes. The two seem to have crossed ( $n = 28$ )  $\times$  ( $n = 35$ ); but the resultant hybrid ( $2n = 63$ ) must have been infertile until it doubled its chromosome-number to 126. This new tetraploid species is hardier than either parent, and is able to colonize tidal mud-flats where neither would previously grow.

The pink garden horse-chestnut arose in a similar way from a cross between the white-flowered European horse-chestnut and the American red buck-eye.

Polyploidy, auto- and allo-, singly and in combination, has undoubtedly played a large part in the evolution both of wild and cultivated plants.

Finally we must mention some groups, such as the blackberries and the willows, where sexual and asexual reproduction, hybridization, and both kinds of polyploidy are combined in such a way that an interlocking network of forms is produced, with lines of descent both converging and diverging. The results defy all attempt at ordinary pigeon-holing, so that the species-concept largely breaks down in such networks.

The only animal in which anything approaching this 'reticulate' evolution occurs is man. If man had been like other mammals, we can be sure that his major 'races' would have diverged along fully separate paths. But his restlessness and his psychological peculiarities have led to the original divergence being replaced by a steadily increasing amount of migration and inter-crossing.

Between one and two million species of animals and plants are known. As we have seen, they differ in their mode of origin, their size, their structure and variability, their capacity to adjust themselves to new conditions or to become extinct. They clothe the world in diversity. New species and new adaptations are still

being evolved, and contributing to this minor diversity of life. But what of the major diversity? Are new long-term trends still being initiated which are capable of producing wholly new types of organism—as novel as the horse or the cat compared to the early mammals; as the warm-blooded mammal compared to its reptilian ancestor; as land animals compared to fish; as flowering compared to flowerless plants?

No one can give a certain answer. Yet it seems probable that life's major trends have run their course. It is a rule of evolution that new major types become dominant by branching out into lines of increasing specialization and that each specialization eventually comes to a dead end. Selection can push it no further along that line—it can merely ring minor changes upon the type by throwing off new species or genera. And when a new dominant type arises, it does so from an unspecialized member of the previously dominant group.

There is one exception to this—the human species. Man is now the dominant type of organism. He has remained unspecialized in structure. He has not radiated out into wholly separate lines. His new capacities for conscious thought and purpose, on which his biological dominance depends, give him the possibility of establishing a common pool of consciousness. His specializations are learnt, not inherited biologically. If he set his mind to it, he could control not merely his natural and his social environment but his future biological evolution.

The study of species is providing part of the essential knowledge which he must amass. During the last few decades, the advances in genetics, cytology, and other branches of biology have made a new, synthetic view possible. The patient and too often unrecognized labours of the museum classifiers are bearing fruit, and are being extended into the field and the experimental laboratory. Within a short space of time, the materials will be ready for a new Darwin to write another masterpiece on the subject—but the title will have to be not the *Origin*, but the *Origins of Species*.

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## BOTANY

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### NEW PLANTS FOR OLD

by W. L. SUMNER

AT the very beginning of the twentieth century, there took place one of the most important events not only in the history of science, but also in the history of the civilization of man. This was the rediscovery of the laws of Mendel, the importance of whose work was appreciated simultaneously by the biologists Correns, Tschermak and De Vries, and almost immediately found application to the improvement of plants and animals in the hands of Biffen, Nilsson-Ehle and others.

Gregor Mendel (1822–1884), an abbot living at Königs-kloster in Austro-Silesia, experimented with plants such as peas to find the laws which govern inheritance, and he published his results in 1866. These were not discovered for thirty-five years. The subsequent study of genetics, or the laws of breeding, was founded on Mendel's patient and humble work. The simple arithmetical or quantitative aspects of Mendel's work are well known, and although Mendel could not have known it, they follow from subsequent discoveries of factors in the cells which combine to initiate reproduction both in plants and animals. In order to make clear to the reader the nature of more recent work, it may be useful to recall the simple facts of Mendelism.

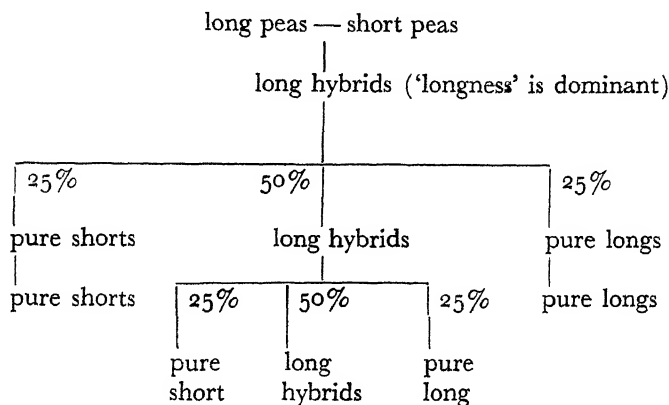
Mendel crossed tall peas with short peas by transferring pollen from the flowers of one to those of the other. He used 'pure' strains of each type of pea, by using seeds which had come from plants which had maintained their long or short characteristics

From PROGRESS IN SCIENCE

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for a number of previous generations. All the peas of the generation caused by his first cross were tall. The peas of this generation were mated together and he found that when the seeds were planted, three-quarters of the peas were tall and a quarter were short. The short peas bred true, and continued in subsequent generations to produce only short peas. With regard to the tall peas, one-third of these bred true as tall peas, and two-thirds were 'hybrids,' and when planted these latter produced pure shorts, hybrid tall and pure tall in the ratio 1:2:1.

This may be expressed in diagrammatic form as follows:—



It should be noticed that the ratio 1:2:1 is that of the probability of throwing two heads, one head and one tail, and two tails respectively when two coins are tossed together a sufficiently large number of times. The connection between this and Mendel's law is obvious when we consider the heredity factors of the cells which combine in breeding. This tiny example will serve to show the value of the mathematical methods of statistics and probability, when they are applied to the problems of combining these heredity factors. Researches by T. H. Morgan into the structure of cells which are responsible for reproduction made it clear that the dark spot or nucleus of each cell contained a number of thread-like bodies which readily took up certain dyes, and were called chromosomes or 'colour-bodies.' These play an important part in transmitting characters and determining the nature of an offspring. When two germ cells unite in reproduction, the fertilized female cell or ovum will contain the sum of the chromosomes of

the parents. When the cell is going to divide after fertilization two spindle centres appear, one on each side of the cell. Much activity is then seen in the nucleus, and a number of chromosomes arrange themselves in a circle at the middle of the cell with tiny threads connecting each chromosome with the spindle point. After a few minutes each chromosome splits down the middle and the parts are pulled to opposite sides of the cell, a process which takes from five to ten minutes. After further activity the cell itself divides and forms two cells, and this takes about half an hour.

The body or somatic cells contain chromosomes from both parents but in the reproductive or germ cells the chromosomes lie together in pairs and unite, and the total number is therefore halved. Sutton pointed out that this phenomenon was the cellular counterpart of Mendel's findings.

The garden pea has seven chromosomes, the mouse twenty, and man apparently twenty-four, but even with twenty over a million types of germ cell are possible. In order to explain the existence of all the factors which are transmitted from parents to offspring, it is necessary to suppose that the chromosomes contain even smaller bodies, called genes, which are arranged in particular patterns and from which arise the characters which are transmissible. The idea of the existence of genes is consistent with what we know about heredity in plants and animals. It is well known that certain heredity factors are sex linked, that is to say, that although they may be carried in the reproductive cells of both sexes, they will only show in the bodies of one of the sexes. Bleeder's disease and colour blindness are handed on through the female, but they appear only in the male. The genes responsible for these conditions are linked to the chromosome which carries the factor determining the 'maleness' of the organism. This principle is applied to the breeding of chickens. It is often necessary for the farmer to distinguish the sexes of day-old chicks, and this was difficult or impossible with normal examination, except apparently to a few Japanese. Sex linkage has made the matter easy. If a golden male, such as a Rhode Island Red, is crossed with a Light Sussex silver hen the male chicks show a white or cream plumage and take after their mother, whereas the female chicks show the red buff of their father. Other examples occur between Brown Leghorn

cocks and Light Sussex hens, and between the Cambridge Legbar and the Sussex.

Chromosomes have been likened to a necklace, and the genes are then thought of as the beads. Chromosomes have the power of splitting down the middle in the process of cell division, so that each half becomes a new chromosome with a full complement of genes. There is thus a tendency for groups of characteristics to be transmitted together to the next generation. Sometimes the chromosomes which lie side by side during the formation of male and female reproduction cells become entangled, and when they separate it sometimes happens that a part of one with its appropriate gene content has exchanged places with another. This produces a mutation.

It readily follows from Mendel's laws that, in some cases, by repeated self-fertilization, careful selection and segregation of plants bearing desirable features, a pure line, containing all the wished-for characters, can be achieved. In a century, by the method of careful selection, sugar beet has been made to increase its sugar content from 9 per cent to nearly 20 per cent and produce larger and finer roots. The importance of the sugar beet plant needs little stressing. In England, the amount of beet sugar produced has been equivalent to the domestic sugar ration of the whole country during the period of the war. Not only do the leaves of the plant combine the carbon from the carbon dioxide of the air with the water of the soil to synthesize sugar, but the tops and leaves of the beet, together with the waste products of the extraction process, make admirable feeding material for cattle, and the molasses when fermented yield alcohol, the basis of many useful synthetic chemicals. Thus, simple selection throughout the years has had an enormous effect on our supply of sugar, milk, beef, mutton and wool.

This method of single plant selection in which plants with desired qualities were used for propagation has had many other applications. In Ireland, the shortage of the imported Russian seeds gave a great stimulus to the selection of flax, and the resulting Stormont Gossamer and Cirrus were excellent lines. During the recent war, linseed has become a popular crop as it could be grown on newly-ploughed land which was infected with wire worm. The Egyptian cotton-growing industry would probably



have failed completely but for the variety known as U.4, selected and developed by Fahmy in 1931, and resistant to the jassid insect. This new strain was produced from a plant which stood out from the others as a clean, healthy growth, while the rest were heavily infected.

It is well known that the wild forms of such plants as the pea, lentil or vetch contain a poison which at once removes their value as a food-stuff for animals which would otherwise be high. No variety of the lupin which was free from this alkaloid poison was known, but in view of the fact that cultivated peas and beans were so useful, it was thought that an extensive search might reveal one and provide an easily grown 'body-building' food for cattle. In 1931, Sengbusch succeeded in isolating strains with very little poison, but the work was kept secret. The Russian botanists took up the search, and moreover developed a technique whereby the poison content of thousands of plants could be examined every week. So rare were the desired forms that in the case of *Lupin angustifolius*, only one out of 31,591 plants was free from poison. Further, sweet forms of the lupin were later found in the Western Mediterranean regions. The sweet lupins breed true, and now that they have been multiplied, they provide a rich source of protein for feeding stock, and the green seeds when cooked make a new green vegetable which is an excellent change from the cooking pea. Breeding by selection within a single species is also applied to animals. Long-legged sheep in America gave much trouble by constantly escaping from their pens. By continuously breeding from any short-legged specimens which appeared, at last was produced a whole flock of short-legged sheep which were easily penned. Other and more important factors have also been developed in both animals and plants.

One of the simplest, yet most important developments in plant breeding was due to the work of N. I. Vavilov and his colleagues of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science. Expeditions to many parts of the world were undertaken to find the original homes of various plants, to collect as many varieties of each in the wild or cultivated state and to use much of this material for the purpose of improving existing varieties or propagating new types in Russia. Incidentally, the Russians discovered the original site of the 'Garden of Eden' in the Persian jungle, and found that it

contained a great wealth of fruit trees in the wild state. Each plant was studied and classified, not only from the botanical angle, but with respect to its heredity factors and its cell structure. These useful geographical studies are also helped by a large-scale correspondence with botanists and plant breeders in all part of the world. Here was a real attempt to put a subject, which is important not only from the botanical angle but also from that of man's food and well-being, on a systematic basis. Hitherto, only local genetical material had been drawn upon, private breeders working with empirical methods had kept their secrets, and the 'changes had been rung' on the same breeding material. Russia offered immense opportunities. It occupies a sixth of the world's land surface, and from the north to the south it stretches from the bleak coldness of the Arctic to the warmth of the Mediterranean countries. Vavilov found that cultivated plants usually showed the same geographical type of distribution as the wild variety. Each type of plant seemed to grow with great profusion of variety in a particular centre. It was as though this was the cradle of the plant, and that nature was still experimenting with it in a relatively small zone. The very existence of certain types of plants had hardly been suspected outside their particular localities until the Soviet expeditions found them. For instance, the 'home' of wheat was found in Abyssinia, and the discovery of so many forms of the hard wheats during the expeditions of 1926 and 1927 completely altered our conception of the genetical nature of this important plant. All possible varieties of grain size, colour, protein and starch content, size of ear and glume, disease resistance, keeping, threshing, milling and baking qualities, and many other factors were found here in altitudes between 8,000 and 9,000 feet.

The great number of new 'genes' thus discovered by the Russians enabled them to solve many of their wheat-breeding problems. They found that the genetical material was even greater than at first sight appeared, for many of the characteristics only became apparent by crossing the Abyssinian varieties with recessive forms. The soft wheats were found to have their centre of diversity in Afghanistan, and the oats in North-West Spain and the Pyrenees. Again, Abyssinia was the home of the barleys, and in the last decade Orlov has found one hundred and twenty

botanical varieties, of which only three were of wide distribution. Thus he obtained all the raw material for the breeding of barleys which should have a high yield, be awnless, resistant to disease and drought, adaptable to extreme conditions and produce excellent malt and straw.

The centres of variety of fruits have not only been found in the Persian 'Garden of Eden,' but also in the mountains of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Whole forests consisting entirely of many varieties of plum in a wild or semi-cultivated form were found. Michurin specialized in the breeding of fruits and it is largely due to him that Russia has a greater number of fruits, some of which are quite unknown in Britain, than are to be found in the rest of the world. Many square miles of cold, barren and bleak North Russia have been turned into orchards owing to his work. Hundreds of new types of vine, peach, apricot, apple, pear, cherry, plum and all manner of nuts and fruit have been developed. The powers of resistance, the freedom from disease and the quality and size of the fruit are in many cases extraordinary. It is claimed by Kovalev that the new apricots will survive with temperature conditions of 72° Fahrenheit below freezing point. Entirely new fruits have been made by cross-breeding. A mountain ash with large sweet, frost-resistant berries which make excellent preserves, an eatable honeysuckle, soft fruits and apples which are resistant to all the diseases so well known to the British gardener, now flourish in Russia. There seem to be eight chief centres of diversity for cultivated plants throughout the world, and there is still much opportunity to study and combine the wealth of breeding material which they yield. This will enable the breeders to produce and multiply plants with exactly the qualities which are needed and which will grow under local conditions.

The story of the improvement of the potato is an interesting example of Russian methods. For more than three and a half centuries in Europe all attempts at improving the potato had taken the form of selection and crossing in a single species (*Solanum tuberosum*). For a long time tradition had it that the potato was introduced into England by Sir Walter Raleigh, who brought it from Virginia. This is not true, and it is probable that a South American potato was included in a collection of plants sent from Virginia, and that Raleigh grew it on his Irish estate

at the end of the sixteenth century. Before 1930 no attempt had been made to introduce 'new blood' into the potato, and all new varieties were produced from year to year by ringing the changes on the same set of genes present in the original species. A time was not far distant when new combinations of the old set of characters would be played out and no further improvement would be possible. Little real progress had been made since 1900. In the words of S. M. Bukasov, the chief potato expert of the Institute of Plant Industry at Leningrad: "Potato breeding was stewing in its own juice, using for the introduction of new varieties always the same old parents in innumerable combinations. A cul-de-sac had been reached, with many problems still unsolved." Now the potato is a most valuable article of diet, it is rich in mineral constituents and contains proteins and vitamins B and C. It is not a complete food in itself, but it still goes far to the solution of many problems of finding adequate diet for large masses of people.

Accordingly, expeditions on three successive years were sent to America to find the home of the potato. The countries visited included Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia and Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina. Over a thousand different specimens were taken back to Leningrad. The results of the Russian researches seemed to show that the original home of the European potato was Chile and the neighbouring island of Chiloe. Besides this investigation to find new kinds of potato the Soviet botanists went into regions where Europeans had never penetrated, and they were rewarded with material from the cradle of the potato, which contained genetical characteristics that could be used for the improvement of this useful vegetable. Not only were the potatoes of the Andes found to be entirely different from the cultivated European potato, but the conditions of environment were also quite unlike those found nearer home. Potatoes were found growing from the latitude  $40^{\circ}$  South to the Tropic of Cancer, and from the sea level to altitudes of 13,000 feet in the Cordilleras. At least fifteen separate species were investigated, and examination showed that they could be arranged in groups with 24, 36, 48, and 60 chromosomes. Many other wild species were obtained, and it was found impossible to distinguish clearly between the wild and cultivated types. One of the main diffi-

culties in obtaining new varieties was due to the sterility of most of the Chilean types and it was impossible to obtain fertile flowers from them. On the other hand, the mountain potatoes from the Andes, in spite of the fact that they only develop in the short days of their native latitude, readily set seed. Thus, they can be crossed and adapted for European needs. The Russians have thus succeeded in producing a potato which is resistant to cold and is capable of withstanding  $14^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit of frost. In 1933, Bukasov, by making use of all the potato-breeding material which had been collected in South America, commenced hybridization work on a large scale. It was not only necessary to produce potatoes which should have a long day reaction and be resistant to frost, but the questions of productivity, quality, earliness and resistance to various diseases had to be considered. The genetical factors still hidden in the potatoes imported from South America will give the Soviet scientists material for experiment for a long time. Most of the South American potatoes were immune to wart disease, and others were resistant to potato blight. This scourge (*Phytophthora infestans*) was the cause of the Irish potato famine of 1845 and 1846, which was said to have caused the deaths through starvation and disease of a million people in Ireland, the emigration of a million others and, even after a century, unhappy memories. The 'short day' types of potatoes offer immense possibilities for tropical districts such as those of India and Ceylon.

Until fairly recently, the production of animals and plants by hybridization between species has not been regarded as a practical method, owing to the sterility of the crosses. The lack of fertility of the mule and the loganberry has been known for many years. An increasing knowledge of genetics, and the use of repeated crosses to secure the desired forms, has gone far to solve the problem of the high degree of infertility usually associated with distant crosses. The production of the wheat known as Hope, by McFadden, has been of the utmost value in supplying rust-free varieties for use in North America and Canada. The cross was made between two species (*Triticum vulgare* and *Yaroslav emmer*) of different chromosome number. Only one plant was obtained, and this in turn produced a hundred shrivelled seeds of poor quality. Further generations were grown and only the large seeds were used to continue the line. After this a process of selection was made

to give varieties which were resistant to drought, damage by the weather and the worst forms of rust and bunt.

A similar method of inter-specific crossing saved the Java sugar industry, when in 1880 it was threatened by a new disease known as sereh. The process is one which necessitates performing the crosses in easy stages. The properties of chunnee, a wild variety of sugar cane found in Northern India and immune to the disease, were gradually incorporated into the cultivated varieties of the sugar cane. Harland, in 1928, commenced a series of crosses with cotton, which he hoped would result in plants free from disease, insect-resistant and possessing an excellent quality of lint. Even crosses between species of the same chromosome number may be far from simple, owing to the fact that by mutations and other genetical changes over long periods of time, they now have few heredity factors in common. A species is not a fixed static thing, but is in a dynamic equilibrium changing with its environment. Attempts to breed between species of wheat and cotton respectively have shown this forcibly. Nevertheless, even in difficult cases of inter-specific crossing it is possible to secure the transfer of a gene or a small group of genes, which will often be sufficient to endow the new plant with just the character which is required.

Crosses between plants of different genus are even more rare and difficult. The hybrids are usually completely sterile, but very occasionally a highly fertile exception appears. These phenomena occur not only in crosses between species but also in those between genera, and usually in those hybrids which normally show the greatest degree of sterility. One of the first of these cases to be noticed, and for which an explanation was given, was the Kew *Primula* or *Primula kewensis*. The hybrid was first obtained in 1899 and was quite sterile. It was propagated by vegetative methods, that is, by taking cuttings, until in 1905 it astonished the botanists by producing seeds, becoming perfectly fertile and thus producing a new species. The explanation was not forthcoming until 1930, when the phenomenon had been re-examined by Newton and Pellew. They showed that each of the parents had a chromosome number of eighteen, and this was also the number in the sterile hybrid. As we have already seen, in order to carry out reproduction, pairing of the chromosomes must take place, and this was impossible in the hybrid which had obtained nine

chromosomes from each parent. During the division of one of the cells of the plant chromosome, doubling must have taken place, that is, the chromosomes had bisected, but complete separation into two cells had not happened. Conditions were now satisfactory for reproduction, and by division six cells were produced, with the double chromosome number of eighteen. When chromosomes double, or multiply themselves by some simple number, we speak of the phenomenon as *polyploidy*. The principle is an important one in the production of new species of plants which are used by man, and we shall meet it again when we discuss mutations. The Russian cereal growers have solved many of their problems by similar methods. The wheat-rye hybrids, which have great resistance to cold and drought, have fifty-six chromosomes and are appropriately called tetraploids, or more generally amphidiploids.

The useful Townsend cordgrass, or *Spartina townsendii*, which has been so useful in reclaiming land or preventing erosion from the sea on the English, French and Dutch coasts, arose in a similar way. About the year 1870, the American grass *S. stricta*, probably brought to this country in the ballast tank of a ship, appeared in Southampton Water. A sterile hybrid was formed from its cross with the local *S. alterniflora*, and eventually, by chromosome doubling, the new species, *Spartina townsendii*, appeared and spread with amazing rapidity. In 1931, Huskins showed that the new species was an amphidiploid with 126 chromosomes, whereas the parents have 28 and 35 respectively —  $2(28+35) = 126$ . The appearance of new species in nature from time to time, and the genetical nature of many existing species can be clearly explained by amphidiploidy, and the artificial production of fertile types from sterile hybrids is becoming common. The best known and most spectacular was the production of *raphanobrassica* in 1927 by Karpechenko from a hybrid between the radish and the cabbage, of different genus. The *raphanobrassica* grows to a considerable height and in appearance gives little clue as to its origin. Again, Karpechenko showed that this fertile plant produces a sterile hybrid when crossed back with either of the original parents. By chromosome duplication in these crosses he obtained a fertile tetraploid cabbage of great size and utility. This principle of back-crossing is very useful in the solving

of some of the problems of practical breeding. No doubt many of our most valued of cultivated vegetables and fruits have developed their present qualities of size and lusciousness through a long history of natural amphidiploidy. Botanists and breeders have often wished that they could produce chromosome duplication at will, and, as will be seen, our control of the behaviour of chromosomes is increasing. More than ten years ago it was realized by workers in many parts of the world that rigorous growth conditions tended to promote chromosome doubling in plants, and hence the appearance of new species. Such hybrids were often noticed after an exceptionally cold winter, after a period of drought or exceptional heat, and in other unfavourable situations. The body cells of plants can sometimes be made to yield polyploid reproductive cells by repeated decapitation. This has already been successful in the case of the cabbage family, and it offers a promise of new types of tomato plants which are so much desired in England.

From time to time, the genes of both plants and animals occasionally undergo sudden changes, known as mutations. Consequently, new characteristics appear in the organism and these will continue in the offspring. Mutations have been called 'jerks in the genes,' and their cause has not been fully explained. The cosmic rays from outer space, which constantly bombard all living things on the earth, are not sufficient in quantity to account for these changes. It was found by Muller and Dobzhansky, who experimented on the fruit fly, that mutation rates could be speeded up to about two hundred times the normal rate by the action of X-rays. (The fruit fly is a most valuable creature to biologists who experiment with heredity factors, for it has well-marked characteristics such as colour, nature of its eyes and the size and shape of its legs, which arise from the arrangement of genes in its chromosomes. Also, it produces nearly forty generations each year; that is, a new generation every ten days.)

Up to the beginning of the war, many hundreds of artificial 'mutants' of plants had been obtained by subjecting their seeds to varying doses of X-rays. A Coolidge X-ray tube, fed with a current of 5 milliamperes at 72,000 volts, and at a distance of about 30 inches from the seeds, will give satisfactory results. The effects of the X-rays vary with the stage of development of the



germinating seeds. Germination is delayed in the case of resting seeds, and where the chromosomes have started to double they are retarded and set back to the resting stage. When they again continue germinating they behave as though they had double or a multiple of the original chromosomes. In these polyploids the plant is usually larger, the fruit is heavier and the yield is greater. Later, it has been found that other physical and chemical agencies will produce similar results. Low temperatures, by restricting the supply of nucleic acid for the chromosomes, have an important effect. The development of the spindle and chromosome spirals can also be controlled by adjusting the temperature at germination between  $3^{\circ}$  centigrade and  $-5^{\circ}$  centigrade; that is, a few degrees above or below freezing point. Miller has continued to produce mutations by modifying artificially the concentration of nucleic acid in the cell round the chromosomes. This appears to him to be the most promising method of altering 'gene patterns,' and therefore, inheritable characteristics.

Temperatures of  $44^{\circ}$  centigrade (about  $111^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit) for a period of from five to forty-eight hours will also cause polyploid conditions in certain plants. Other conditions were found to modify the changes in the chromosomes at cell division (mitosis). One of these was centrifuging. The seeds are put in a tube which is then revolved at the edge of a disc at a great speed. Considerable forces thus act on it and will tend to separate its heavier and lighter constituents. Allowing seeds to age before commencing germination is another means of inducing special nuclear changes.

Certain vegetable poisons and substances, which assist plant growth, known as plant-hormones, may also cause changes in the dividing cell. One of the most useful extracts for this purpose is colchicine, which is obtained from the autumn crocus or meadow saffron. Buds, seeds or runners of various plants are treated with dilute solutions of colchicine, varying in strength from one part in ten thousand to one part in sixty, for periods of half a day to a week.

A great future was predicted for these artificial mutants, but in the great majority of cases this was doomed to disappointment. Most of the mutations, apart from polyploidy, appeared to give unwanted recessive characteristics, and only rarely did any improvements result. The desirable characters would appear to be

limited to those with a neutral or negative survival value, but which may under cultivation become useful and desirable from an economic point of view. Examples where this method will prove to be useful are the production of various leguminous seeds without the poisonous qualities which often render them unsuitable for feeding animals, the development of wheat with greater frost resistance and a tobacco plant with low nicotine content. The quest for varieties of the sweet lupin, which have been so often sought for, particularly in Europe, find these methods of artificially-produced mutations very valuable.

Another important development in plant breeding, and one which has been the subject of much discussion and controversy, is known as vernalization. For many years, gardeners have allowed their seed potatoes to 'sprout' before planting them, and vernalization is really an extension of this principle. Ten years ago, Lysenko of Odessa published a theory that plant growth and plant development were two separate and distinct phenomena. According to Lysenko, development depends on various external conditions which may differ at different stages; and that if these factors are understood and can be provided artificially, if necessary, development will proceed at a rate which can be controlled without much growth taking place. Thus, the early development stages of a seedling can be hurried, and after it has been planted out, it will grow rapidly and soon set its seeds. Accordingly, material for plant breeding can be obtained rapidly, and it is even possible to obtain several generations in one year. By sowing seeds of wheat in August, immediately after harvesting, and giving them suitable light and heat treatment, the Russian botanists were able to obtain mature grains of barley at the end of September and wheat at the beginning of December. They claim that two or three years are saved by this method when making a cross. Normally, the plant breeder has to take nature's time in waiting for his results, but the Russians have shown how these important operations in plant genetics could be speeded up.

The early development of a plant shows a number of distinct stages, and the length of each stage is different in each variety of plant. For instance, in the case of wheat, the first stage demands a temperature just above freezing point for a definite number of days, and this has to be followed by the light of long days, also

for a definite period. After this, the plant can pass on to growth and maturity without any further period of low temperature or even long hours of light, and, in fact, a comparatively high temperature will hasten the process. By studying a number of varieties of wheat, Lysenko was able to show that certain types of wheat were late in maturing because the first stage took so long to accomplish, although all the others passed very rapidly. Other varieties were slow in the second stage of development only. Lysenko obtained crosses from these two types which gave early maturing plants, and he obtained thirty varieties which were earlier than either of their respective parents. These early types all show a combination of the genes of a variety from the extreme north such as Ladoga, and a variety from a warm country such as India. The northern type develops in the comparative cold of the almost continuous day of such latitudes, whereas the southern type needs warmth but is almost neutral to light. This research, which deals with fundamental characters so necessary in agriculture rather than with the inheritance of simple Mendelian factors, has been instrumental in bringing immense new areas in Russia under cultivation.

The most important characteristic of a plant which is used as a food-stuff, is its yield. Empirical methods of selecting the plants, which seemed to give the highest crop, were the only means employed to improve yield for many decades. Within the last twelve years, systematic attempts have been made to analyse scientifically the factors concerned in productivity of plants. In 1933, Rasmusson, working in Sweden, found that between a hundred and two hundred genes are concerned in the inheritance of such characters as yield and quality. Further, he showed that the effect of a particular gene is not constant, but depends on the number of other genes which have a determining effect, and diminishes as this number increases. As in psychology and neurology, where the method of isolation of single factors has had to give way to patterns or configurations as is shown in the gestalt psychology, so we find in genetics certain analogous effects, where the whole gene pattern has to be considered and Mendelism does not offer the whole explanation. In view of the many factors which control the yield, statistical methods have been applied in this study. These require a mathematical method for working out the

probabilities that certain characteristics will appear, and the classification of large numbers of different factors. Ingenious machines, electrically operated, have eased the toil of calculation; and, in fact so many variables had to be considered that in most cases the matter would not have been practicable without such instruments as the Hollerith calculator. Boonstra in Holland has made a systematic study of yield, which he finds to be determined by all the processes which have occurred at each stage of the development of the plant. The problem is only one of genetics in so far that each of these processes is determined by inherited characteristics. In particular, Boonstra stressed the importance of an efficient root system to the yield of the plant, and showed that a high yield in parental forms does not guarantee the same performance in the offspring. A given yield may be built up in many ways, and this end point gives no indication of how it was built up. As an example, the extent of the assimilation of carbon dioxide by leaf surface may explain yield in one plant, in another by the long useful life of the leaves, and in others because of their ability to absorb nourishment through their root system or their powers to carry quickly the assimilated products from one part of the plant to another.

In the foregoing we have considered only the nature or heredity of the plant. Its nurture, that is, its environment and feeding, is obviously important. The mature state, whether of man, animal or plant, is a product of the influence of both nature and nurture. The soil needs feeding with the chemical substances which are essential to plant life, and if these can be obtained in a natural or organic form there is often an advantage to the plant. The necessity of tiny quantities of certain elements for its successful growth is an interesting fact. Such trace elements are boron, copper, zinc, manganese, iron, selenium and others. The list of elements is quite a long one, and certain of them seem to be essential to the growth of particular plants. Traces of molybdenum seem to be necessary for the growth of tomatoes, as is zinc for maintaining the health of the citrus fruits such as oranges and lemons. The living organisms of the soil are also important to the health of the plant. Although some of them are destructive to plant growth, others cleanse the soil, and by breaking it up make its contents more easily assimilable and aerate it. An important group of

bacteria fix the nitrogen of the air, and help to provide the 'building stones' of the plants' protein content.

Perhaps there was not much encouragement to English plant breeders from the economic point of view before the war. The 'kindly fruits of the earth' were often thought of only in terms of finance and not from the aspect of a varied and healthy diet for every one in the world. The war has forced this latter outlook of vegetable and animal yields on us. There is a world food shortage at present, and if the botanist, plant or fruit grower can make two blades of grass appear in the place of one, and, moreover, produce better grass, he is indeed a man who should have the thanks of his fellows. Excellent plant-breeding work is done in England at Cambridge, where is the Imperial Bureau of Plant Genetics, which has a world-wide outlook. Many remarkable new plants have been produced at the John Innes Research Station at Merton. In the U. S. A. there is a large institute at Beltsville, Maryland, where new types of plants and animals are developed. An 'all white' meat turkey, hens which lay eggs of standard types, onions which produce no 'weeping' and new types of fruits are amongst its recent achievements.

## THE DIFFUSION OF GREEK CULTURE

### *Macedon and the East*

by W. W. TARN

IN SPEAKING of the East one's thoughts naturally turn to Alexander of Macedon, for he was the foundation of all that happened later; but it will be necessary to pass lightly over Philip's amazing son, who in his brief life lifted the civilized world out of one groove and set it in another, gave to Greek thought and science the opportunity of spreading over half Asia, and by starting the Hellenization of Asia Minor and Syria gave to Christianity when it came a medium in which it could grow and expand; he died in 323 B.C. of a fever at Babylon before he was thirty-three.

I cannot describe here that tremendous feat of arms, the conquest of the Persian empire; or the great progress in several sciences due to his expedition; or his character, so far in advance of his day that no one could understand him; or his mystical relations with the god Ammon, to which none might allude; or the design falsely attributed to him later of conquering the Mediterranean basin, or even the world; or the unexampled mass of legends which, from Britain to Malaya, became attached to his name. I must confine myself to just one thing bearing on Asia, though probably it was the most important thing about him. He had been Aristotle's pupil, and crossed to Asia holding the common Greek belief, which Aristotle had stereotyped, that mankind was sharply divided into Greeks and barbarians, the latter,

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Asiatics in particular, being inferior people, only fit to be conquered and enslaved. Once he had seen Egypt and Babylon, and had met the hard-fighting Persian nobles in battle, he realized that this would not do; barbarians, like Greeks, must be treated on their merits, and the best took high rank. For himself, there was henceforth, as St. Paul was to declare later, neither Greek nor barbarian; it was one of the greatest revolutions in thought known to history. He had to apply this to the Persians, whom he had conquered and now had to live with; he decided that the Iranian race was too important and virile to be held down, and that his only course was to take them into some sort of partnership. He began with various practical measures—many Iranian satraps, some Persian nobles in his bodyguard, a mixed army, mixed marriages on a considerable scale; his Macedonians did not like it, but his active mind had already, in thought, gone far beyond such things: he declared that all men were sons of one Father, the earliest enunciation known of the brotherhood of men, at least among western peoples. It was this which led, shortly before his death, to the unique scene at Opis.

To celebrate the end of the great war, he gave a banquet at Opis near Babylon to 9000 men, at which every race in his empire, and also Greeks (who were not in his empire), were represented. After the banquet the whole company made a libation in unison at the sound of a trumpet, which was a religious act, and the ceremony culminated in Alexander's prayer. He prayed for three things: first for peace; then for the partnership in the realm of all the peoples of his realm there gathered together; and lastly that all the peoples of his world might be of one mind together and live in unity and concord. For Alexander believed that he had a divine mission to be the Reconciler of the World; and it was his dream of unity which inspired Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy, with his vision of the world as one great city of gods and men, without distinction of race, bound together by their own willing consent, and subject only to that Universal Law which was God. Many have dreamt Alexander's dream since; but he was the first. He was fortunate in his death, for had he lived he would, being Alexander, have tried to make that dream a reality, and would have failed as men have failed ever since. Perhaps today we *have* to succeed, or perish.

After Alexander's death, the wars between his generals for his empire left Seleucus in control of nearly all the Asiatic portion. He and his son carried on what Alexander had begun in Asia, but it was not done in Alexander's spirit; any idea of partnership was abandoned, and Macedonians and Greeks, who in Asia soon became indistinguishable, were to be the dominant race; these kings did not desire to Hellenize Asiatics, but to make a strong state of their own people. Alexander had been a great city-builder, and had built some 17 Alexandrias, nearly all in the Far East or in India; beside the great Alexandria in Egypt, five are still represented: Khojend, Merv, Termez, Herat and Ghazni. The Seleucids caught his inspiration and ultimately filled parts of Asia with Greek cities, notably Asia Minor, north Syria and Babylonia. Some cities were founded directly; more perhaps were military colonies which developed into cities. These cities had their own Greek city law; most contained bodies of Asiatics, sometimes very large, who had not the franchise, though individuals might have; but the Greek magistrates administered the whole city, and all the inhabitants were subject to the Greek city law. Greek civic forms proved attractive to Asiatics, and purely Asiatic towns are found later with Greek city organization and Greek as the official language.

The old idea that the Greeks in Asia soon became half-caste Levantines is entirely untrue, at any rate prior to the Christian era; they took much trouble to preserve their Greekhood. By the second century B.C. one Greek culture sphere extended from the Adriatic to India, and literature and learning might be found in the most remote places; the historian Apollodorus (*c.* 100 B.C.) came from Artemita beyond the Tigris; the astronomer Seleucus, who fought a losing battle in defence of the heretical theory that the earth went round the sun and came near to the true explanation of the moon's influence on the tides, worked in a Greek city on the Persian Gulf. The Stoic school had a branch in Seleuceia on the Tigris, and some cities could give training in rhetoric and grammar; every important city had a theatre where classical Greek plays were acted. The discovery of Greek poetry written at Susa in the first century B.C. was startling.

From the cities Greek culture radiated to such Asiatics as desired it, though its adoption, where it happened, was usually



superficial; but Greek was a conquering tongue wherever it went, and various Asiatics wrote in Greek for the sake of a world-wide public. Greek law was also a strong Hellenizing influence, for all the native populations in the cities were subject to the city law, which was Greek; in Syria, for example, there ultimately grew up a mixed Graeco-Syrian law. Babylonia was exceptional in this regard (and in others), for though, for trade purposes, the Babylonian business man might take a Greek name and write in Greek, the Babylonian business world was never affected by Greek law, while in several small ways Babylonian civilization affected Greeks, the only civilization which did; the cooperation of Greek and Babylonian astronomers is a very bright spot in Hellenistic history, but it was the Babylonian who gave, the Greek who took. However, one way or another, through the cities, law, language, and through long years of contact and trade intercourse, there grew up a sort of Hellenistic varnish which overspread most of western Asia. But it remains true of every form of contact that all that Asia took from Greece was outward form only, and never spirit; in matters of the spirit Asia knew that she could outstay the Greeks, as she did.

This was very notable in the religious sphere, where Greeks had nothing to give to Asia. Being polytheists, they naturally, wherever they settled, worshipped the god who knew the way of the land, and identified him with some god of their own; but Asia never worshipped Greek gods, while she exported her own religions freely to the Mediterranean—the mystery religions of Asia Minor and Syria, and the terrible Babylonian Fate, with whom there came to the western world the curse of astrology. But Greeks in Asia were not so entirely bemused by the Oriental religions as sometimes supposed; it is interesting to find them at Susa compelling the great goddess Nanaia to do their bidding, to her own detriment, while the farther east we go the more we meet with the most Greek of all deities, Athena.

The native arts of Iran were apt to borrow, and sometimes misapply, a modicum of Greek form and ornament; but in the third century pure Greek art flourished in Asia Minor and Syria, and in the second the realistic coin portraits of the Graeco-Bactrian kings are the high-water mark of all Greek portraiture. Alexander, in opening up a new world, had given a tremendous

impulse to international trade; masses of detail are now available, and some of the new luxuries, like Malabar pepper and Chinese silk, have quite exciting stories of exploration, Greek or Chinese, behind them; few cities have so dominated the trade of half a continent as did the mighty Seleuceia on the Tigris, where all the main routes converged.

Two great things the Greeks in Asia did. One was the invention of the Seleucid calendar, in which for the first time chronology was reckoned from a fixed era, as today. The other was this: Most of the peasantry of the Persian Empire had been serfs. When land was transferred to a Greek city, the serfs tended to become free 'settlers' and their villages gradually acquired some form of corporate life; and as, concurrently, the Seleucid colonies were growing into cities, the whole level of civilization over large parts of Asia for a time steadily rose. When one considers the vastness of the Seleucid experiment, it seems amazing that it failed; but fail it ultimately did, except in Asia Minor and Syria, where Rome salvaged it. The reasons are simple: there were not enough Greeks in the world, and they never went on the land, but collected in cities; conquerors may come and go, but the land belongs to those who till it. The cities, outside the Roman Empire, ultimately became enclaves in the Parthian or some other native state; they for long maintained their individuality, and some may have struggled on into the third century A.D., but all were ultimately swamped in the Asiatic tide.

We must turn to India. Alexander had invaded India with a small army and with one friend in view, the ruler of the great city of Taxila (near Rawalpindi). After desperate fighting and great feats of arms, like the capture of the precipitous rock stronghold of Aornos, he had cut his way as far as the Beas in the eastern Punjab; there, with half his army dead or on his communications with Taxila, and the rest, after eight years of marching and fighting, worn out by the heat and the rains, his men refused to go farther, and he went home down the Indus and across the Makran. On his departure, the new king of Magadha on the Ganges, Chandragupta the Maurya, united northern India into the Mauryan empire, which came to embrace the whole country north of the Deccan, and nothing of what Alexander had done in India remained save the legend of his name and three or four

of his cities, islets in the Indian flood. Seleucus made a permanent treaty of peace with Chandragupta, and gave him a daughter or niece as a wife for himself or his son; so it is possible that Chandragupta's grandson, the famous Asoka, who converted most of northern India to Buddhism, had some Macedonian (Seleucid) blood.

In the latter part of the third century the Seleucid satrapy of Bactria-Sogdiana (northern Afghanistan and Russian Turkistan), Iran's bulwark against the nomad world, gradually achieved independence, and its third king, the Greek Euthydemus, who married the daughter of a Seleucid princess, made of it a very strong state; Professor Toynbee's great work has shown how a 'march' state normally develops disproportionate power. The Seleucids had never obtained the cooperation of their Iranian subjects; but Euthydemus must have followed Alexander's idea, for he secured the support of the native landowners and their splendid cavalry, and also so improved the condition of the peasantry that their villages became quasi-corporate townships. He and his son and successor Demetrius enlarged their kingdom and Demetrius took Alexander's title 'Invincible'; he meant to be a second Alexander, as he very nearly was.

In 184 B.C. the last Mauryan emperor was assassinated, and the derelict empire was promptly invaded by Pushyamitra, king of Vidisā, from the south and by Demetrius from the north. Demetrius and his generals swept northern India, and his General Menander took the Mauryan capital Pātaliputra on the Ganges (near Patna); Demetrius' dominions lay in a vast horse-shoe round the Rajputana desert, and for a few years he ruled from the Persian desert to the middle Ganges and from the Syr Daria to Kathiawar and Gujerat. There is no mystery as to how he succeeded where Alexander had failed. Asoka had made most of northern India Buddhist, and Buddhists preferred the tolerant Greek to the earnest Brahmin Pushyamitra, who in the tradition, true or false, persecuted them. One of the firmest principles of Hellenistic Greeks was that no man's religion was anybody's business but his own, and, while all Indian religions were to be equally safe in Greek hands, the whole Buddhist world welcomed the Greeks as their champions and saviours. Demetrius frankly followed out Alexander's idea and took India into partnership; he

ture; an occasional Greek who became a Buddhist or a Bhāgavata or who could quote the *Mahābhārata*—that seems about everything, now that the classical Sanskrit drama is known not to have been derived from the Greek. Certainly Indians respected Greek science, and later made that vanished people magicians: their doctors could restore sight to the blind (? operations for cataract) and Greeks could make and fly aeroplanes. Greek influence does, however, show in the so-called Gandhāra ('Graeco-Buddhist') school of sculpture, the product of "Buddhist piety utilizing Greek technique"; the earlier pieces show a large amount of Greek form and ornament, which later dies out, but the subjects are practically always taken from the lives of Buddha. Though this school *must* be connected with the Bactrian Greeks, many still maintain that it was started far later by workmen imported from the Roman Empire, a theory full of difficulties.

However this may be, the beginnings of the Buddha statue itself can be dated from coins. Indians had never represented Buddha in human form; his presence was indicated by symbols. But early in the first century B.C., at latest, Buddhists were getting Greek artists to carve for them scenes from Buddha's life, and the Greeks naturally portrayed Buddha as they did their own gods, as a beautiful man, like Apollo. So when, later on, Indians, dissatisfied with the Greek Buddhas, desired something which better expressed their own feelings, they too had to represent Buddha in human form, for it was too late to do anything else. Ultimately Indian artists were to reach the greater spirituality toward which they were struggling; the transition from the Greek to the Indian type has been illustrated more than once. Buddhism has long vanished from India; but, as a matter of history, every statue of Buddha in Asia is there today because some nameless Greek artist, to earn his living, first portrayed Buddha in the only way he knew of.

India today retains just one living trace of Greek influence, the Alexander descents of the Hindu Kush. The Seleucids invented a fictitious pedigree which made them lineal descendants of Alexander, and the Euthydemid kings, Seleucids on the distaff side, proclaimed themselves descendants also. When the nomads conquered Bactria and Greek India, some Greeks took refuge in the hills; some hill ruler would marry a Greek woman, who, even if

not of the royal blood in some Greek kingdom, would in the family tradition soon become so, and consequently a descendant of Alexander. North of the mountains, most of these families are extinct; if any still exist they are Soviet citizens. But there are still such families on the Indian side; Hunza, for example, is (or recently was) ruled by a descendant of Alexander with a British title. Of the whole tremendous adventure of Greek rule over northern India, only that one thing has survived—a legend based on a fiction. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity.

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# DRAM A

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## MALVOLIO

A ONE ACT PLAY IN VERSE

by STEPHEN WILLIAMS

### CHARACTERS:

- MALVOLIO, formerly steward to Olivia, now running an apothecary's shop;  
FABIAN, formerly servant to Olivia, now helping Malvolio in the shop;  
OLIVIA, married to Sebastian;  
MARIA, her waiting maid.

The action takes place in Malvolio's shop in Illyria, about three years after the events in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night."

SCENE: A room adjoining an apothecary's shop, looking out on the street. A summer evening. Malvolio, very grave and dignified, sits writing at a table on which there is a lamp. The Clown's voice is heard in the street as he passes the window.

### CLOWN:

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?  
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low:  
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;  
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.

*From THE POETRY REVIEW, Galloway Kyle, Editor*

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*MALVOLIO:*

My grief should know that voice; and the song, too.  
 Why, 'tis the song that Feste used to sing  
 Three years ago. How cruel its magic then!  
 How viciously it used to sting my sense!—  
 Poison in that bee's honey! Is't possible?  
 After so long—so long. (Opens window.) Yes, 'tis the Fool,  
 Galliarding down the street; two women with him,  
 Who try to silence him. Their hooded gowns  
 Billow before the breeze like clouds of smoke,  
 And dissolve too, like smoke-clouds as they fade  
 Into the twilight. (Shuts window.) Miserable Clown!  
 Why do you break the prison of the past,  
 Prise open echoing dungeons in my mind  
 Which I thought closed for ever? Dungeons—pah!

The stench of one still crawls into my nostrils;  
 Poisoning the sweet air of this summer night—  
 Putrid!—but not so putrid as the gibes  
 Which you and Toby gibbered through the bars,  
 Like strident monkeys; you, with green eyes of malice,  
 Toby, his nose half eaten with the pox,  
 His lips still speckled with the drunkard's slime.  
 Toby! Whom I had thought to make my kinsman!

“O Mistress Mine”—so runs the measure. Nay,  
 You were my mistress only in those dreams  
 That stretched my senses like a viol string,  
 Till the note snapped and hummed out into silence,  
 Into air that gave it being; then I awoke,  
 Awoke before the fields of heaven could flower,  
 And, like a creature in another play,  
 I cried to dream again.

Well, “Mistress Mine,”

You had your triumph; but you could not know  
 The sacred essence of the dream that dies  
 Before the light of day disperse its colour,  
 And therefore dies, and therefore lives for ever;

The flame that flickers out upon the wind  
Before it sinks to ashes; and therefore fades,  
And therefore shines for ever. In my dreams  
I had you. In my dreams I have you still,  
Tight prisoned in a prison with no walls,  
Stronger than any prison ever built  
Because not built at all. (Enter Fabian.) Ah, Fabian;  
How goes our trade?

*FABIAN:*

The world is full of fools.

Is that a proper answer?

*MALVOLIO:*

'Tis a just one.

And, to tell truth, my conscience sometimes pricks me  
That we should thrive on that preposterous birth-rate.  
We are thieves, Fabian; we rob the blind.

*FABIAN:*

If I were blind, that's what I should expect.

*MALVOLIO:*

What, robbery?

*FABIAN:*

Nay, 'tis no robbery;  
No more than a musician robs a deaf man  
By playing him something that he thinks is music;  
No more than a clown, who entertains a clod,  
Lives by his talents. We live by our talents,  
Practising them on fools who have no talents.  
Are we then thieves?

*MALVOLIO:*

I was a fool myself once,  
And certainly I thought it thievery.



*FABIAN:*

You were a fool? Now, master, recollect:  
Have you forgotten then our friendly pact?  
That time when you were—shall I say?—distraught,  
I took you from the scene of your distress,  
And we set up this shop——

*MALVOLIO.*

Yes, I remember.  
I vowed I'd put the past out of my mind,  
And look into the future. But, Fabian——

*FABIAN:*

Beware now——

*MALVOLIO.*

No, 'tis not the past, my friend,  
It is the present: we are doing harm.

*FABIAN:*

Dear master, tell me: where's the harm we do?  
Sell a lame man a draught of coloured water,  
He goes home happy, thinking he is cured;  
Sell an old lecher herbs to cure his lust,  
He goes home happy, thinking he is impotent;  
Sell a love-philtre to a desp'rate lover,  
He walks in heaven, dreaming she will love him.

*MALVOLIO:*

Fabian, you are a born apothecary!

*FABIAN:*

My mother, sir, had higher hopes for me,  
But they, not she, miscarried.

*MALVOLIO.*

Then you think  
The end of human life is to be happy?

*FABIAN:*

I'd rather be a happy than a wise man.

*MALVOLIO:*

Not many men are both. Come, close the shutters.  
There is a chill wind creeping through the night,  
Colder than a dead man's hand.

*FABIAN:*

Why, no, 'tis warm;  
A summer night, scented and lyrical;  
Even a hint of thunder in the air.

*MALVOLIO:*

Then leave the window bare unto the night.  
The chill's in me, perhaps; I'm out of humour;  
Something turned over in my heart just now,  
And shook my body.

*FABIAN:*

Shall I go and mix  
A taste of your own med'cine?

*MALVOLIO:*

Let me alone;  
The jest is out of season.

*FABIAN:*

Pray, forgive me.  
The summer night is playing in my blood  
A most aspiring music. I'll be gone.  
I have to give a lesson to a wench,  
But not in music—nor shall I need a philtre.

*MALVOLIO:*

Take care you do not need some other cure  
Some three days afterwards—

*FABIAN:*

Nay, never fear:  
I know too well the stuff that cure is made of!

*MALVOLIO:*

Forget all that and let it make you happy!  
What signifies it that you are not wise?  
You go home happy, thinking you are cured.  
Sell a young lecher herbs——

*FABIAN:*

Good, good! you've won!  
That bout is yours. But wait till I return:  
Love will have lighted torches in my brain  
To dazzle you with sparks of rhetoric.

*MALVOLIO:*

Good-night, then. (Knock) Hark! We shut up shop too soon;  
Who knocks so late?

*FABIAN:*

(At window) Two women, darkly hooded.  
They say a woman's work is never done,  
Here are two proofs of it. And yet perhaps  
They come for play, not work.

*MALVOLIO:*

I'll have no play.  
See what they want. (Exit Fabian.) There were two with the clown.  
One looked like something out of memory;  
A shadow, like the shadow that is thrown  
Sometimes between the sunlight and my eyes.  
I will make sure. (Goes to window.) Yes, yes—'tis the same two;  
Their hooded cloaks still billow to the breeze,  
Like clouds of smoke. The second—I was right:  
I have held her in my arms so many nights  
In lonely, bitter ecstasy. 'Tis she,

Olivia! The night wind is a sculptor,  
 Blowing the cloak about the moulded form,  
 Until it stands even like a naked statue  
 Against the sky. Old heart, are you there still?  
 Why don't you turn my ribs into a drum,  
 Thundering and hammering for your lost freedom?  
 Why don't the heavens split and shower down blood  
 Upon my open eyes, choke up my mouth  
 Drown all my shattered senses in the bliss  
 That it is death to know? Is time so strong?  
 Can it be that this ghost is laid for ever?  
 (comes down centre)

I used to weep when memories  
 Burned like unnatural stars to keep  
 The lacerated heart from sleep;  
 And staged for my reluctant eyes  
 Farces I played as tragedies.  
 I used to weep . . .

I weep no more; for on my grief  
 Indifferent time has closed the door;  
 Bringing what memory should deplore,  
 A bitter, barren, bare relief,  
 And sighs that wound—they are so brief.  
 I weep no more . . .

Alas, poor ghost of bygone years!  
 I cannot tell which hurts the most:  
 My memories, a luminous host,  
 Or this indifference, that hears  
 Your voice, yet cannot give you tears.  
 Alas, poor ghost!  
 (Re-enter Fabian)

*FABIAN:*

I told them we had done; but—as I said—  
 A woman's work——

*MALVOLIO:*

I know. Convey them in.

(Exit Fabian) (Puts on mask and turns down lamp)

She's coming in now. I can hear her step.

How calm I am! I think I have no heart.

It's still, thank God! It's cold. Time, you're my friend:

You have tamed my wild heart . . . Alas, poor ghost!

(Re-enter Fabian with Olivia and Maria,  
hooded and masked)

*FABIAN:*

Here is his worship.

*OLIVIA:*

Maria, wait outside.

*MARIA:*

Take heed, my lady; do not be misled

Into rash acts. My mind is not at rest;

May I not stay with you?

*OLIVIA:*

Do as I bid you.

(Fabian takes Maria out, winking at Malvolio as he goes)

The hour is late. Am I importunate?

*MALVOLIO:*

Lady, I have some skill in alchemy,

And what I have I sell. This is a shop;

I'm forced to earn my living by my learning.

But—learning does not stop at closing time;

My shop may shut; my mind is always open

To learn fresh things. What can I learn from you?

*OLIVIA:*

'Tis you must teach. I come to you for help;

And yet I know not how to start. I fear

To tell you all——

*MALVOLIO:*

But you must tell me all;  
Know you not I must learn before I teach?  
How can I help you else? Come, cast out fear;  
I think I am old enough to be your father.  
Look to me as a father. Tell me all.

*OLIVIA:*

I want to rid my conscience of a dream  
That saturates it. O you cannot know  
What grief is mine! Have you a herb—a herb—  
Something to drive this poison from my heart,  
Something to kill the memory of love—  
Yet not a memory—No—there was no love;  
But now there is. God, must I tell you all?  
Three years ago, a man—he was my steward—  
Was tricked into believing that I loved him.  
I did not love him. No, I did not love him;  
My heart was guiltless—do you understand?—  
Guiltless as is a child's. I laughed at him  
When he, poor wretch, poor bird in amorous plumage,  
Appeared before me wearing yellow stockings—  
A colour I detested—and cross-gartered—  
A fashion I abhorred—I laughed at him.  
Why do I tell you this?

*MALVOLIO:*

You did great wrong  
To laugh at love. But you must tell me all.

*OLIVIA:*

I did great wrong; but not so much to him:  
I did not know 'twas love; I thought him mad;  
Perhaps he was; madness and love are kin.  
No, no, I did great wrong, but to myself:  
For now 'tis I am mad. What was my mirth  
Is now become my scourge.

*MALVOLIO:*

What do you mean?

*OLIVIA:*

I am the sufferer: the love I spurned  
Returns to plague me. For Malvolio,  
I know not what befell him. Two days after,  
He passed out of my life.

*MALVOLIO:*

Was that his name?  
Malvolio? On your lips the name is music.

*OLIVIA:*

If music be the food of love . . . It is!  
I told you that he passed out of my life.  
I lied to you: he passed out of my sight;  
Yet every day and every night since then  
I see him, see him with the eyes of love,  
Eyes that can overleap a thousand miles.  
I love him.

*MALVOLIO:*

Why, what rhapsody is this?  
You—*love* him?

*OLIVIA:*

O, I know 'tis foul in me;  
A wife, a mother; aye, sir, I am both.  
My husband—nay, Sebastian's not my husband,  
Not in the sight of God, who sees my heart.  
No, not my husband, though I bore his child;  
There was no love; life should be born of love.  
Well—so it was, but not Sebastian's love.  
When I looked up into Sebastian's eyes,  
I saw Malvolio's; when that child was made,  
I thought not of Sebastian.

Now—you know all.

Have pity on me! I want a cure for love,  
A cure for love!

*MALVOLIO:*

You are a haunted woman—

*OLIVIA:*

Haunted. Yes, yes; tell me, what can you do?

*MALVOLIO:*

A haunted woman, and upon your heart  
There is a plague-spot that you cannot cleanse  
Till a new plague afflict it.

*OLIVIA:*

You seem moved;  
There is a strange enchantment in your voice  
That stirs the past. What? Have we met before?  
I think you are a wizard.

*MALVOLIO:*

That's my trade.  
I was once a fool, but now I live by fools.

*OLIVIA:*

I am afraid. I cannot see your eyes,  
But they possess me. Let me go from here—

*MALVOLIO (Rising):*

You shall not go! The irony of fate  
Never entangled helpless human hearts  
In such a web of splendid mockery—  
Aye, splendid mockery.

*OLIVIA:*

Mockery? What means this?  
Why do you bar my way? Maria! Help!  
I tell you I must go!



*MALVOLIO:*

You shall not go.  
To let this moment pass—why, it would spoil  
The most tremendous jest God ever made  
To kindle laughter in eternity! (Distant thunder)  
Hark! Do you hear him laughing in his thunder,  
Splitting the sides of heaven with his mirth?  
See how the lightning wrinkles up his face!  
Olivia! (Tears off the mask and raises the lamp.)

*OLIVIA:*

Malvolio!

*MALVOLIO:*

Yes, Malvolio!  
You knew not what befell Malvolio;  
This—*this* befell Malvolio: God delivered  
His enemy into his hand.

*OLIVIA:*

His enemy? -  
You would not murder me?

*MALVOLIO:*

Ha! Never fear:  
I would not be so merciful.

*OLIVIA:*

O, shame!  
To have told all this to you—to you—to you!  
Shown you my secret heart.

*MALVOLIO:*

I showed you mine  
Three years ago.

*OLIVIA:*

Ah! But you were a man;  
A man may show his heart; a woman, never.

*MALVOLIO:*

What did I get for showing you my heart?

*OLIVIA:*

O, do not speak of that! Have I not wept  
To think what barren weeds sprang from your love?  
Love, gentle love, whose children should be flowers,  
Whose flowers should be children.

*MALVOLIO:*

Answer me:

What did I get for showing you my heart?

*OLIVIA:*

Pain and disgrace; but not of my creation.  
I swear I did not know, I could not know,  
That day when I made you my laughing stock,  
How God would make me his.

*MALVOLIO:*

Shall I tell you

*All* that I got for showing you my heart?

*OLIVIA:*

My tears rob me of breath. I cannot speak.

*MALVOLIO:*

They locked me in a madhouse cell,  
And made my madness feed their mirth,  
Because I thought I could compel  
Beauty to rate me at my worth;  
Because I deemed my worth could make  
Nature obedient to art,  
And sometimes dreamed that love might take  
Compassion on a hungry heart.

*OLIVIA.*

O, love was deaf and love was blind,  
And love saw not the wound it made.  
Be merciful! You are repaid  
Daily and hourly, and in kind.

*MALVOLIO:*

I did not care; I had discerned  
The love that strikes men blind and dumb;  
And for one blessed day had turned  
Illyria to Elysium.

*OLIVIA:*

Illyria to Elysium!  
Then you did glean some happiness?  
Some light shone down on your distress,  
Some tender thought did sometimes come?

*MALVOLIO:*

They locked me in a madhouse cell  
Because I'd lost my wits, they said.  
I breathed the prison's bitter smell,  
I ate the prison's bitter bread.  
I bore Sir Toby's ribald spleen  
When he and Feste mocked my scars,  
And scarcely heard the gibes obscene  
They hooted through my window-bars.

*OLIVIA:*

Never by me were they designed;  
I knew nought of the pranks they played.  
Be merciful! You are repaid  
Daily and hourly, and in kind.

*MALVOLIO:*

I did not care; for I had burned  
With fire that raised me from the scum,  
And for one day and night had turned  
Illyria to Elysium.

OLIVIA:

Elysium! Why, then, you found  
Some secret solace in your heart,  
Some hope from which you could not part,  
Some dream that raised you from the ground?

MALVOLIO:

A dream that spanned a night and day,  
And healed my heart and made it whole;  
That day and night have passed away;  
The dream stays ever in my soul.  
My faded yellow stockings lie  
Beside those garters worn for you;  
As if they would persuade the eye  
To tell the mind my dream was true.

OLIVIA:

Your dream was true! I know it now;  
Malvolio, your dream *was* true.  
And fate has led me back to you;  
I will not question why or how.

MALVOLIO:

It was not true. But it was fair;  
And never will I kill the lie  
That bids me cherish through despair  
My deathless rose of memory.

OLIVIA:

Your dream *was* true. Malvolio,  
I know it now; your deathless rose  
Is the undying flower that glows  
Here, in my bitter heart. And so?

MALVOLIO:

And so it was that once I learned  
The love that leaves all senses numb;  
And, for all time to be, I turned  
Illyria to Elysium.

(A long pause)

*OLIVIA* (Very softly) :

Malvolio: need it always be a dream?

*MALVOLIO*:

Always. My dream is my reality.

*OLIVIA*.

Malvolio: what of *my* reality?

*MALVOLIO*:

You have left your reality at home.  
Go back to it, and trouble mine no more.

*OLIVIA*:

Go back! I think I never shall go back.  
Malvolio: I, too, have seen the rose  
That burns within the memory like a star,  
Red as the blood of Christ upon the Cross;  
I, too, have known the love that strikes men blind,  
And unseals women's eyes. I, too, have turned  
Illyria into Elysium.

*MALVOLIO*:

I will not stay to hear my words blown back,  
Like paper in the wind.

*OLIVIA*:

You shall not go!  
Shall we not taste the irony of fate?  
To let this moment pass—why, it would spoil  
The most tremendous jest God ever made!

*MALVOLIO*:

Leave me. I will not hear my dream degraded.

*OLIVIA*:

Have you, then, a monopoly of dreams?  
Malvolio: you are my prisoner,

Tight prisoned in a prison without walls,  
 Stronger than any prison ever built,  
 Because not built at all. I, too, have known  
 The dream that dies and therefore lives for ever;  
 I, too, have yearned that love some day might take  
 Compassion on a hungry heart. Love did:  
 It was the love I cherished in my soul  
 These three years past; the love that grew and quickened  
 Even as a child that leaps within the womb;  
 The deathless rose of memory that changed  
 Illyria into Elysium.

*MALVOLIO:*

For you there was no need of such a change;  
 For you Illyria *was* Elysium.  
 Do you forget Orsino's headstrong love,  
 Which you despised, as was your gentle fashion?

*OLIVIA:*

Speak not of him; Viola has that love.

*MALVOLIO:*

Sir Andrew—there was a feast spread for your wit!  
 A greater fool than I, if such can be;  
 The boon companion of your uncle Toby.

*OLIVIA:*

Toby is dead.

*MALVOLIO:*

Of drink, I have no doubt.

*OLIVIA:*

It was not well to say you had no doubt.

*MALVOLIO:*

And, to complete the tale, Sebastian,  
 Whom you trapped into marriage—

OLIVIA:

—No—no trap;  
A sad mistake. I have paid for that mistake.  
Daily and hourly I have paid for it.  
Be merciful! You are avenged—in kind.

MALVOLIO:

Confess, then; there *was* something to avenge?

OLIVIA:

Malvolio: I have opened up my heart,  
As though a surgeon's knife had cut it out.  
What further can I do? You torture me.  
I came here desperate for a cure for love—  
No more of that. What's in your shop I know not,  
What potent arts you may command I care not;  
I want no cure for love: I have found love.  
Are you a man? Can you not read my heart?  
This is the supreme hour in both our lives;  
If we reject it, we kill life itself.

MALVOLIO:

Why should we not kill life? What has life brought  
To you or me? To you a foolish husband,  
To me a love despised, a madhouse cell,  
An apothecary's shop——

OLIVIA:

—A splendid dream  
Which has this hour come true.

MALVOLIO:

Olivia:

That is mere woman's talk. If dreams came true,  
There would be dreams no more. The holy fire  
That lifts man's being high above himself,  
That paints his mind in pictures, hoists his visions

Upon the wings of music, sets his words  
Sailing upon a halcyon stream of verse,  
Would fall to ashes. How can dreams come true?  
And why should dreams come true?

*OLIVIA:*

You are a man;  
A man can live by dreams. I am a woman,  
And for a woman dreams are not enough.

*MALVOLIO:*

What further do you wish?

*OLIVIA:*

I wish to live;  
I cannot live by dreams. Malvolio:  
I want your love again, even as that day  
You stood within my garden, in your eyes  
The light that lit the lovers of all time,  
And mirrored the bright sun.

*MALVOLIO:*

You laughed at me.

*OLIVIA:*

O yes, I laughed at you; scourge me with that;  
Say it again—again! I thought you mad;  
But now I know too well that *I* was mad.  
Now that my eyes are open to the truth,  
I laugh no more. Malvolio, say you love me—  
You love me!

*MALVOLIO:*

No, I will not, cannot love you!  
I hate you now because you laugh no more.  
You? Who are you? I know you not. I love  
The "Fortunate Unhappy," she who laughed  
To see that vain, deceived, bedraggled peacock,  
Brave in his yellow stockings and cross-garters,



On that June day, ringed round with laughing flowers;  
 Laughed with the music of heaven in her laugh.  
 She whom I love was haughty, proud and cruel.  
 She was a queen enthroned within my being,  
 She was a star enshrined within my soul,  
 She was a goddess crowned in paradise.  
 I have her still; never can she elude me;  
 Never can she withhold her queenly presence;  
 Never can she reject the offerings  
 I lay before her in the dust of dreams,  
 Humble, yet deathly proud. I am her slave,  
 Rejoicing in my servitude. And you—  
 Wife of Sebastian—mother of his child—  
 You come to me with love, with mortal love;  
 You come to break this box of spikenard,  
 To tear the fabric of this fantasy,  
 Dig up this buried treasure. O, your love,  
 Your vanity, your itching lust to shatter  
 This holy shrine, and raise one to yourself—  
 Wife of Sebastian—mother of his child!  
 How can you think that I would change that dream  
 For this reality?

*OLIVIA:*

Malvolio:

Cast out this dream, shake off this fantasy,  
 And live, Malvolio. Life calls to us;  
 Why should we struggle? Why should we resist?  
 We are caught fast within the toils of life,  
 Caught in its wheel and whirled round at its pleasure—  
 Its pleasure! And *our* pleasure—what of that?  
 Love spreads her golden pasture at our feet  
 To tread into delight, as the wine-pressers  
 Tread out the teeming grapes. Immortal longings  
 Heave up their urgent clamours in our breasts.  
 Our children: they are crying to be born.  
 Do you not hear them, singing in your blood,  
 Singing the song that rises above death?

*MALVOLIO:*

I can hear nothing but your voice.

*OLIVIA:*

Behold me:

Is not my hair enticing to your eye,  
Soft to your touch? Touch it, Malvolio.

(He puts out his hand, shudders and draws it back)

Is not my flesh desirable? 'Tis white

(She draws down her dress, revealing part of her breast)

White as the moon when she lies on her back,  
Quivering with ardour for the cloud's embrace.

I am your moon; you are my cloud, Malvolio—

Stifle me, cover me with your vast embrace!

See, see, my flesh is white. Touch it, Malvolio,

Touch it! Sebastian kisses my twin breasts,

When he bends over me and girdles me

With his strong arms as with a belt of love.

Why should it be Sebastian? Why not you?

Your arms are strong—enfold me with your arms—

Press me to death with love——

*MALVOLIO:*

Ah! Godless harlot!

My hate and not my love shall overpower you.

You have thrown filth upon my memories,

Debased the image of what once you were.

My dream shall live, the reality shall die!

(Draws a knife and points it at her breast)

*OLIVIA* (Inspired):

Look in my eyes, Malvolio, look in my eyes!

Why should you heed a dying woman's cries?

E'en though their sharpness make you catch your breath;

E'en though they ring in your brain until your death?

Say are you brave, Malvolio, are you brave?

Dare you destroy the truth, your dream to save?

Be strong, Malvolio, summon what strength you can  
Against the power that woman has over man.

Look in my eyes, Malvolio, look in my eyes!  
Let them not shake your purpose. Are you not wise?  
Here is my breast; an opening flower 'tis like;  
Look, then, Malvolio, look in my eyes—and strike!

*MALVOLIO* (Drops dagger):

Fool! I am still the fool that earned your laughter  
That day in the garden. See my yellow stockings,  
If you have eyes. And garters—yes, cross-garters,  
Not on my legs, but in my burning brain,  
My cracked and burning brain! Oh, fool! fool! fool!  
(Buries his face in his hands over the table)

*OLIVIA:*

Nay, you are wise as you are cruel. I go.  
We have both lost our senses in this darkness.

*MALVOLIO:*

Lady, you are free to go. You leave this house  
Unchanged in soul and body.

*OLIVIA:*

Not in soul.

*MALVOLIO:*

I will not touch your beauty with my hands,  
Nor with this useless dagger.

*OLIVIA:*

I could have wished  
For one fate or the other; better, both:  
I could have wished your hands had given me life,  
And, after, death; death as a swift release  
From that transcendent and divine unrest  
Makes life too strong for life. Both you denied me;

I have gained nor love nor death. The jest is over.  
Farewell. May God have pity on your heart—  
And on mine, too. (Exit)

*MALVOLIO:*

God will do as God wills.

(Malvolio stands for a moment looking after her. Then he sits at the table, opens a great book and stares in front of him. Voices are heard outside and the shutting of a door. Then the Clown's voice as he passes down the street, escorting Olivia and Maria.)

*CLOWN:*

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;  
Present mirth hath present laughter;  
What's to come is still unsure:  
In delay there lies no plenty;  
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

*CURTAIN.*

MY WAY WITH A PLAY

by BERNARD SHAW

NOTWITHSTANDING the easy terms of a friendly acquaintance with Allardyce Nicoll, I cannot contemplate his histories of the British drama without being somewhat overawed by the superhuman industry and devotion in which, as a great professor, he shames a mere practitioner like myself. The second volume of his *History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama, 1850-1900*, is a list of plays compared to which the telephone directory, compiled by an army of officials from ready-made information, is a trifle. It leaves me dumb with grateful wonder. I have not a word of criticism for its distinguished author: all I dare add as an experienced practitioner is a note or two on the limits and unavoidable misfits of any index which presents the order of events in the commercial theatre as the order of evolution in the art of the theatre.

For instance, a passage in Professor Nicoll's first volume fairly made me jump. Because my vogue in the fashionable London theatre came after that of Pinero, Jones, Carton, Grundy, and Wilde, and supplanted it, it is assumed that I developed in their school and learned my art from them. As a matter of fact I was furiously opposed to their method and principles, and had my bag full of unacted plays before the limelight shifted from them to me. They were all for "constructed" plays, the technique of construction being that made fashionable by Scribe in Paris, and the sanction claimed for it no less than that of Aristotle. Plays manufactured on this plan, and called "well-made plays," I com-

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pared derisively to cats' cradles, clockwork mice, mechanical rabbits, and the like. The critics reported that my plays were not plays, whatever other entertainment value they might possess.

Thus, instead of taking a step forward technically in the order of the calendar, I threw off Paris and went back to Shakespeare, to the Bible, to Bunyan, Walter Scott, Dickens, and Dumas *père*, Mozart, and Verdi, in whom I had been soaked from my childhood. Instead of planning my plays I let them grow as they came, and hardly ever wrote a page foreknowing what the next page would be. When I tried a plot I found that it substituted the absorbing interest of putting it together like a jigsaw puzzle (the dullest of all occupations for the lookers-on) for communicable dramatic interest, loading the story with deadwood and spoiling it, as in the lamentable case of Goldsmith's *Goodnatur'd Man*, which without its plot would have been a classic.

Shakespeare's practice of recklessly borrowing his stories from the books of contemporary novelists, and filling them with his own characters, was not an example but a warning. The self-conscious poet henpecked into murder by an ambitious wife, who is, in turn, termagant, drunkard, and somnambulist, was an absurdly incongruous imposition on the hard-fisted warrior of the Macbeth story. Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* is a thousand times more natural. Hamlet, brought up in militant barbarism, plunged in a blood feud, and finding himself incapable of the conventional revenge because he had evolved into a Christian without knowing it, is an amazing stride forward from the stage zany and village idiot of the old ghost story. *Measure for Measure* is a hopeless tangle of moral contradictions. No plot could restrain Shakespeare's dramatic genius any more than the conventions of sonata form could restrain Mozart's; but the resultant incongruities are still there; and the attempts to imitate them by less gifted disciples are pretentious failures: the bane of the academic schools.

The art of all fiction, whether made for the stage, the screen, or the bookshelf, is the art of story telling. My stock-in-trade is that of Scheherazade and Chaucer no less than of Aristophanes and Shakespeare. I am quite aware that the jigsaw puzzle business, the working out of a plot, is necessary in detective stories, and helpful to playwrights who have talent enough to put their clockwork mice through amusing tricks, and hold their audiences

effectively by jury-box suspenses. When I read a couple of acts of my first play to Henry Arthur Jones, all he said was, "Where's your murder?" But I needed no murder: I could get drama enough out of the economics of slum poverty. I scorned the police news and crude sexual adventures with which my competitors could not dispense. Clearly I had nothing to learn from Henry Arthur: he had something to learn from me, and did. But, as his vogue came before mine, Allardyce Nicoll, tied to the order of date, begins by placing my vogue as a development of Scribery. Later on, led away from chronology into criticism, he forgets all this, and sets it right, leaving me nothing to complain of. I allow myself, nevertheless, to emphasize the fact that the difference between me and the Scribe school was, and is, timeless, and that far from turning the hands of the clock forward I whirled them back to Scheherazade.

Like Gilbert Chesterton I was full of Dickens, and had noted how vainly he bothers himself with plots. He let himself be persuaded that by inscrutable complications his characters should turn out to be somebody else, with secrets, hidden relationships, and virgin heroines pursued matrimonially by repulsive villains. But who cares for or can remember the plots of *Oliver Twist* and *Little Dorrit*, or prefers the few pages which unravel them to the straight stories of *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*, though even in that masterpiece the heroine turns out at the end to be the convict's daughter and gives him a movingly happy death? The happy ending of Pip and Estella, imposed on Dickens by Lytton, is as false as that of Benedick and Beatrice was declared to be by Mrs. Cowden Clarke.

Another timeless art inseparable from the history of the theatre is the art of acting, which, as actors have to live by their work, lands us at once in the economics of the theatre. These, as our few up-to-date historians have learned from Karl Marx, are basic in all histories. By leaving them out of account Professor Nicoll has produced a hiatus in his history between the retirement of Macready in 1851 and the advent of Irving in 1871, during which Shakespeare "spelt ruin" in London, and speeches longer than a couple of dozen words were considered excessive in modern plays. The only steady income made by a famous player in that period

was in the British provinces by a Shakespearean actor of what Walter Scott called the Big Bow Wow school. His name is not even mentioned in Professor Nicoll's index. He was Barry Sullivan, the natural and sole successor to Burbage, Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean, and Macready in the British dynasty of supreme masters of their art. He was often described as an Irish actor; and his statue is in Glasnevin, the Dublin Catholic cemetery; but he was born in Birmingham of Irish parentage in 1821. He learned his business from his boyhood in the stock companies of Cork, Glasgow, and Manchester, where he played all sorts of parts, even including operatic ones.

After a brilliant success in London as Hamlet in 1852 he went to America for three years and to Australia for five, returning to England in his middle age a great tragedian, to be described in the *Times* as the leading legitimate actor of the British stage. He took a second-rate theatre, now a boxing arena. After spending too much on its renovation, and beginning with an obsolete program, he lost money in a month or two. This insult to his greatness he could neither afford nor forgive. He shook the dust of London from his feet, and decided to tour in the provinces, resolved that if he had to play there to ten people everyone of them would come again and bring a hundred others with them. This actually happened. Soon he never left the provincial capitals without three hundred guineas in his pocket every week. He died opulently rich in 1891. And his chief author was Shakespeare.

In the 1860's, when he was between forty and fifty, I, then a boy in my teens, saw him for the first time, as he had seen Macready in 1815. The play was *Hamlet*, which he played thousands of times throughout his long life. Such acting I had never seen or imagined before, nor was its impression weakened when, much later on, I saw the acting of Salvini and Ristori, the last of the great Italians, from whom I gathered what else I know of great acting.

Compare his career with that of Irving, who clung to London for thirty years, and was knighted and buried in Westminster Abbey as the unquestioned head of his profession. Beginning with a guarantee from a millionairess, he made much money for the owners of the Lyceum Theatre. For himself he made nothing by his continuous labor but his vogue and his living. At the end of



the thirty years he left London with his pockets empty; returned to the provinces to repair his fortunes; and died there a much poorer man than Sullivan. The moral is obvious: London for reputation and quotable press notices; the provinces for money and artistic scope.

It was an old story. Macready had held out in London for six years only before taking to the road. Sullivan, beginning London actor-management at forty, when he was accustomed to continuous financial success, would not consent to make money for his landlords and employees whilst earning and losing it himself. He at once "cut his losses" and abandoned London.

This economic situation still persists. Sir Barry Jackson, who recreated and brought the theatre up to date from nothing to the Malvern Festivals, did so wholly in Birmingham. Having accomplished this he attacked London and had such success as is possible there. At its height he, too, shook the London dust off his feet and returned to Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon, where he got back to real artistic work again. Nugent Monck, who revived high drama and kept it alive in Norwich, ignored London. Rutland Boughton's Glastonbury Festivals, memorable events in operatic history, would have been impossible in London.

I could multiply instances; but these are enough to convince Allardyce Nicoll that a history of the drama which leaves the provinces and Barry Sullivan out of account, and describes my return to sixteenth-century practice (analogous to the pre-Raphaelite movement in painting) as a development of the practices of Scribe and of that adroit manufacturer of stage-Irish melodramas, Dion Boucicault, needs another chapter.

I did the old stuff in the old way, because, as it happened, I could do it superlatively well. I did not know this when I did it; but now I have outgrown it and can look back at it as the work of another person with whom I can no longer identify myself. It seems plain enough to me. Also from my boyish visits to the theatre (I began with a pantomime as a child) I had acquired that theatre sense which, when I am writing a play, keeps my imagination unconsciously within the conditions and limits of the stage, the performers, the audience, and even the salary list—all now extended enormously by the cinema.

This, too, has made an economic revolution needing perhaps another volume, for it has raised the profitable cost of production of a play from £2,000 to £2,000,000. Clearly there is plenty more for the Professor to do; but as I should be sorry to see him slain by his own prodigious industry, I refrain from further suggestion.

RAIMU

by J. B. PRIESTLEY

THERE is now another little hole in the wall through which the east wind can whistle. Raimu is dead. I shall go on enjoying French films, I hope, but I shall never look forward to them with the same old eagerness, not without Raimu. I never understood more than about a sixth of what he said, but still he was my favourite film actor. (As he was also the favourite of some of my actor friends, themselves famous on the films.) Take equal portions of Ralph Richardson and Charles Laughton, mix and season well and allow the mixture to mature, then add a rich Southern French dressing—and you have Raimu. He was that rare and satisfying type, the big juicy Frenchman.

Even in poor films—and I saw him in one, new to me, only three months ago, in Berne—his own performance never disappointed you. He might be shoddily tricked out as a crook with a heart of gold, in an unreal bit of nonsense, yet he created his own reality, gave the sagging stuff a lift, and by a tone, a look, a cunning entrance or exit, persuaded you that you were seeing something human and good. He had, as Ralph Richardson has, a ripe earthiness lit with magic, for which I would gladly exchange all the romantic profiles in the world. Like all the tragicomedians, he conjured you into the mood when you do not know whether to laugh or to cry. He was always larger, more massive, infinitely heavier than all the players round him, and yet he offered more light and shade than they did. His crooks were his least important creations, just as the films that presented them

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were of no merit, and yet even his crooks had moments of sudden startling ferocity and then other moments of weariness and despair, shown in his great sagging back, that turned these routine characters, if only for a few seconds, into new Macbeths. His rich *bourgeois* figures, as in *Le Roi S'Amuse*, were wonderful studies of complacency and self-approval, touched by doubt and a kind of wondering wistfulness. There was in the best of them, too, that hint of a knowing gleam, possessed by all the great comic actors, which suggested that this dupe and butt was at least the equal of his audience in intelligence, tipping us the wink that we are all dupes and butts in our turn.

I never saw him in *Marius*, which we are told was his greatest triumph, and I think he will remain longest in my memory as the uxorious baker in *La Femme du Boulanger*. Here again I would say that he gave the tale a lift that removed it from the region of rather primitive rural manners, giving it a breadth and symbolism. His baker, so proud of his craft, so bewitched and bewildered by his wife's beauty, so helpless in his fall, so inarticulate and wistful when beauty, robbed of its earlier bloom, came home (and remember how he produced the little cake shaped like a heart), was Man himself, the artist and boastful fool, the betrayed animal and the immortal maker. And if the film cast a longer shadow than the original tale, that was because Raimu brought to it his own genius.

There were many fine French films in which Raimu had no part, but much as I enjoyed the performances of Baur, Juvet, Francen and the rest, I was always hoping that Raimu would turn up somehow, that the stout man in the restaurant or the man behind the newspaper in the café or the civic dignitary at whose office door we waited would suddenly reveal those familiar heavy features, the pendulous lower lip, the haunted eyes and lost look of the born tragi-comedian. Even if there was no mention of his name, I hoped to hear again those hoarse tones, now rumbling and dubious, now suddenly snapping into ferocity, now rising to *bonhomie*. It is true that I never understood more than one word in six of his dialogue, but he contrived to suggest such a warmth and richness of life that I felt I was listening to some of the finest speeches in the world. The very gaps in some of his films, the sequences I never quite followed, seem better in retro-

spect than whole admired epics from Hollywood. Though only in this land of shadows, I had met a character; and in that great glittering world of Super-productions and Colossal Stars and Unmatched Brilliance of Talent, I had the luck to run across an artist.

Because he played in films we have not entirely lost him at one stroke. We can magically command him to return out of those flat tins of film, and show us again his warmth and rich humanity and massive deliberate art. But the copies will soon dim and fray; that hoarse voice will be harder to understand; those heavy features will fade until at last we shall not be able to see him push out his lower lip again. The French are good at monuments: they should erect one to the memory of this player, who reminded us so often, in the darkening thirties, that France had known a Rabelais, a Molière, a Balzac, that the old spirit had not flickered out entirely but could light up a cinema screen for an hour or two.

So Old Raimu has gone, lumbering off the set like a wondering bear for the last time, and the gap he has left will not be filled in a hurry, for me, by Cocteau's romantic spectres or by Existentialist performers. Come—my cloak, for there is now another little hole in the wall, through which the east wind whistles.

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## EDUCATION

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### THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITIES

by J. MACKAY-MURE

IT was stated categorically in a recent article in *The Economist* that "the labour shortage is nowhere more acute or likely to be more lasting than among the ranks of administrators, business managers, scientists, teachers, architects and doctors—in fact, the professional and managerial classes as a whole." It was also suggested, in the same article, that this hunger for trained and educated men could not be dismissed merely as a legacy of war. Rather must it be accepted as the inevitable consequence of the development of a civilization "which puts so heavy a premium on so many professional skills, which would break down without its host of specialist advisers who alone master the techniques of its complexities, physical and human."

The result of these developments is a demand for increasing numbers of "educated" men and women possessed of the capacity to think and to act independently. To produce such educated men and women is essentially the function of the universities; and the report of the Barlow Committee on scientific man-power is a convincing statement of the need for the capacity of British universities in all departments of teaching and research to be doubled within a decade. While the primary task of the committee was "to consider the policies which should govern the use and development of our scientific man-power," the report gives welcome prominence to the importance "of an association which takes all knowledge as its province and in which all branches of knowledge flourish in harmony," and deprecates

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any attempt to meet the increased demand for scientists and technologists at the expense of students of other subjects (even if, as is unlikely, the universities could be persuaded to make such an attempt) or to give any preference to science students over arts students in such matters as military service.

In reaching the conclusion that nothing less than an increase of 100 per cent., in the capacity of the universities will suffice, the committee has been rightly concerned to stress that, although it may not be possible to assess statistically the demand for graduates in the humanities, "the expansion of these faculties cannot be left entirely to trial and error if there is to be no danger of a growing 'lack of balance' in the universities." Having regard to the fact that in pre-war years 22,000 arts students were matched by 27,000 in the science faculties (if medicine, agriculture and architecture are classified as sciences), it is obvious that, if the culture and civilization of the country are to remain in balance, a large increase on the science side demands an only slightly smaller increase on the arts side. It has, however, to be admitted that the Barlow Committee has been influenced by the urgency of the immediate need for trained scientists. Whereas there are to-day not more than 55,000 qualified men and women with university or equivalent training, in the mathematical, physical, chemical and biological sciences, it is estimated that the number required by 1955 will be not less than 90,000. Nor should the achievement of this increase present insuperable difficulties in the science faculties, although it may be difficult for the arts faculties to reach the same proportionate increase in less than fifteen years. The science departments of the universities remained at almost full strength throughout the war—the numbers neither of students nor of staff falling to anything like the same extent as in the arts faculties. While there were 9,632 students studying medicine, science and engineering at London University in 1938-39, there were 8,500 in 1944-45; and at Oxford, where the number of arts students fell from 3,967 in 1939 to 1,755 in 1944, the number of science students only dropped from 1,065 to 815. Since the most acute bottle-neck in any scheme of expansion is the staffing, it is obvious that the science departments are more fortunately placed than the arts faculties. If it is assumed that it is not unreasonable on these premises to plan for a 100 per cent. increase in science

students in ten years, it is not inconceivable that a total student population of 100,000—or double that of 1938–39—can be envisaged as a practical target for 1960.

Judged by the pre-war position in other countries, a demand for an increase of 100 per cent. in the student population of Great Britain within the next ten—or even fifteen—years is extremely modest. A student population of 50,000 in 1938–39 represented a proportion of just over one per thousand for the total population. In New Zealand the ratio was 1 to 250; in France, 1 to 550; in Denmark, 1 to 650; and in Belgium, 1 to 700. In the United States there were 1,000,000 students and 100,000 full-time staff, “so that with a population less than three times as large as Great Britain’s there were twenty times as many students and twice as many university teachers as the whole student population of this country.” Nevertheless, such comparisons can be—to say the least—misleading; and the Barlow Committee, in seeking to estimate the proportion of the population inherently fitted to benefit from a university education, wisely echoes the warning given by the University Grants Committee in its quinquennial report of 1936, and draws attention “to the difficulty of ensuring that the institutions taken into account are of comparable status, that the students are studying similar subjects at comparable intellectual levels, and that statistics are obtained for the same year in the countries compared.”

At the same time, having surveyed the results obtained in recent years on the distribution of intelligence (as measured by “intelligence tests”) among the whole population and among samples of the members of certain universities, the Barlow Committee estimates that, although rather less than two per cent. of the population now reach the universities, “about five per cent. of the whole population show, on test, an intelligence as great as the upper half of the students, who amount to one per cent. of the population.” While it would be foolish to assume that all these possess the other innate capacities necessary to a university career, there is, clearly, in the words of the report, “an ample reserve of intelligence in the country to allow both a doubling of the university members and, at the same time, a raising of standards.”

One of the most significant passages in the report is that in



vide assistance for a proportion of the total number for which it will ultimately be as necessary as it is already desirable.

But what of the problems with which university authorities will have to contend if the student population is to be doubled? More than a year ago—in May 1945—the University Grants Committee invited all universities in Great Britain and the three university colleges of Exeter, Nottingham and Southampton to estimate the expansion in their student body which they were prepared to contemplate, assuming the necessary finances would be available, on the return of normal conditions. Although Oxford and Cambridge considered the further expansion of their numbers to be both impracticable and undesirable, the English civic universities indicated that an increase of eighty-five per cent. might be possible within the first post-war decade. The replies of the universities, taken as a whole, envisaged a potential increase in student population during this decade of forty-five per cent.—or rather less than half that urged by the Barlow Committee. While an acute shortage of staff may well have influenced the authorities of certain universities in making their estimates, it is not unreasonable to suppose that, despite the assurances of the University Grants Committee, financial considerations *did* enter into calculations.

The annual revenue of the universities was, in 1937–38, £6,500,000. Of this sum £2,500,000 was contributed by the Treasury, £600,000 in grants from local education authorities, and £1,400,000 from endowments and special services. What of the future? It might be argued that, if £6,500,000 supported 500,000 students in 1937–38 and if the level of prices has permanently risen by 50 per cent., £19,500,000 would support 100,000 students in 1955 or 1960. But, as has been shrewdly observed,

the figures are likely to be considerably larger. Standards of equipment, both for teaching and research and for other purposes, need to be raised and the cost per student will rise sharply if there is to be any increase in the residential proportion, either by the provision of more halls of residence for the civic universities (which are very badly needed) or by new residential foundations.

Indeed, the total annual expenditure for a student population of 100,000, part from capital grants, is likely to be nearer £30,000,-

000 than £20,000,000; and the greater part of this sum must inevitably be provided by the Treasury.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already announced that he proposes to make available to the universities in 1946-47 the sum of £9,450,000, including grants of £2,250,000 for capital expenditure. Not only does this compare favourably with the pre-war annual Treasury grant of £2,500,000 but, in making this announcement, the Chancellor also intimated that, in order to encourage the universities to plan future developments over a term of years, he had told the University Grants Committee that he would be prepared, if good cause were shown, to ask Parliament to vote even larger capital sums.

Why, then, the seeming unwillingness on the part of the universities to embark on a policy of long-term development? Is it the fear that, as the sums voted by Parliament for the work of the universities increase year by year, the Treasury's policy of non-interference may be reversed? Or is there the suspicion in the minds of certain university administrators that the distribution of increased grants will be made conditional on university planning being controlled by a Government committee? Nothing, it will be generally agreed, would be more disastrous for British university education than for expansion to become synonymous with control; but is not the remedy in the hands of the universities themselves? If the student population is to be doubled, it is obvious that the expansion will have to be carefully controlled. The distribution of the expanded numbers will require to be determined. The facilities which each university will offer for specialization will need to be agreed. How better can these and similar problems be resolved than by the universities themselves taking the initiative and creating the necessary machinery by establishing a representative body, independent of the University Grants Committee, capable of meeting the Government on equal terms and agreeing on concerted plans?

While the need for a national plan for the universities is to-day indisputable, it would be nothing short of disastrous if such a plan were to be evolved by a committee or council not fully representative of the universities. The active association of regional interests and personalities has, to cite a single instance, given a specific quality to the civic universities. It is, indeed, this regional

attachment which has linked these universities and their work to important local developments and influential local bodies. To weaken regional ties or to loosen the association of a university with its region would be to cut across the most marked development of the civic universities in recent years. The possibility that regional associations might be totally disregarded in the evolution of a national plan may have influenced the Association of University Teachers in framing its declaration that only the growth of responsible self-government in the universities can meet both the opportunities and the dangers of the future. University autonomy is a principle of peculiar sanctity; and it is not one which should be lightly overthrown. But a condition of its maintenance is that the universities determine for themselves, and in co-operation one with another, their purposes, functions and policies in relation to contemporary needs.

## HISTORY AND THE READER

by G. M. TREVELYAN

THE older I get and the more I observe the tendencies and conditions of our latter day, the more certain I become that history must be the basis of humane (that is, non-scientific) education in the future. Without some knowledge of history other doors will remain closed, or at best ajar. For example, the reading of poetry and prose literature, other than current books, must rest on some knowledge of the times past when the older books were written. Some understanding of the social and political scene of Chaucer's, Shakespeare's, Milton's, Swift's world, of the world of Boswell, of Wordsworth and Shelley and Byron, of Dickens and of Trollope, of Carlyle and Ruskin is necessary in order fully to appreciate the works in question, or even in some cases to understand what they are about. Music needs no such historical introduction to be fully appreciated, for it is not allusive, or only slightly. But literature is allusive; each book is rooted in the soil of the time when it was written. Unless our great English literature is to become a sealed book to the English people (as indeed I fear it is to many), our countrymen must know something of times past.

Literature and history are twin sisters, inseparable. In the days of our own grandfathers, and for many generations before them, the basis of education was the Greek and Roman classics for the educated, and the Bible for all. In the classical authors and in the Bible, history and literature were closely interwoven, and it is

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that circumstance which made the old form of education so stimulating to the thought and imagination of our ancestors. To read the classical authors and to read the Bible was to read at once the history and the literature of the three greatest races of the ancient world. No doubt the Classics and the Bible were read in a manner we now consider uncritical, but they were read according to the best lights of the time and formed a great humanistic education. I fear that today the study both of the Classics and of the Bible has dwindled to small proportions. What has taken their place? To some extent the place has been filled by a wider and more correct knowledge of history and a wider range of literature. But I fear that a great part of the lacuna has been filled up by rubbish.

Similarly, and only in a lesser degree than in the case of literature, the enjoyment and understanding of architecture and of painting and of all the domestic arts are enhanced by knowledge of history. The man who knows no history can travel through Italy thinking it very pretty and picturesque and queer, but understanding very little of what he sees. Foreign travel is enjoyable and instructive largely in proportion to the amount of historical knowledge which we take with us across the Channel. But I am glad to observe that the power of enjoying old buildings by means of historical knowledge and imagination is very widely spread today. That is something to build on, educationally and culturally. In the years before the outbreak of the war, as many as 15,000 people every year visited Housesteads, to see Borcovicus Fort on the Roman Wall, a property of the National Trust. That is to say, 15,000 people a year, speeding along the Carlisle-Newcastle road, got out of their motor-cars or buses, or got off their bicycles, and walked half a mile uphill to inspect the ruins of some old Roman buildings on that wild moor. There is no beauty in the ruins which are little more than foundations, but the historical imagination of the visitors was touched. Some knew, more went away desiring to know, something of the history of the Romans in Britain.

The visitors to ruined abbeys and castles, to country houses and parish churches, enjoy themselves in proportion as they are equipped with historical knowledge, and with the historical imagination and curiosity that leads them to desire such knowl-

edge. Disinterested intellectual curiosity is the life blood of real civilization.

The Anglo-Saxons, though more important than the Romans in the history of England, have left fewer monuments, for the Saxons' buildings were of wood, not of stone, except only their churches, and most of their churches were replaced by lordlier structures after the Norman Conquest. So there is a tendency for the Anglo-Saxons to drop out of the popular picture of our island history. Out of sight, out of mind. Yet, even so, there is a considerable curiosity about our Saxon forefathers, a desire to know the results of the very fine work by which the Anglo-Saxon scholars and archaeologists of the last thirty years have done so much to reveal the truth about that long and vital period in the making of England. Mr. R. H. Hodgkin's *History of the Anglo-Saxons* is an admirable example of the way in which the results of the latest scholarship, difficult and abstruse in their nature, can be made understandable and attractive to the general reader. Professor Stenton's great work on *Anglo-Saxon History*, recently published in the Oxford History of England, will appeal, perhaps, to few readers, but those who will apply themselves to read it will have the fascinating privilege of seeing the very pulse of the machine of scientific historical discovery at work. Mr. Hodgkin's and Professor Stenton's Anglo-Saxon histories are excellent examples of two different kinds of scholarly history, somewhat differently related to the needs of the reading public.

But the interest and value of history is very much more than the key it affords to the literature, art and monuments of the past. In itself history raises and attempts to answer two great questions—(1) what was the life of men and women in past ages? and (2) how did the present state of things evolve out of the past? The reader can be interested in the past for its own sake, for the value or instruction he finds in former states of society and former habits of thought which have passed away and left little or nothing behind. Or else the reader may be interested chiefly in the explanation which history alone can afford of the origin of the institutions, beliefs, habits and prejudices of the various peoples of the world at the present day. In other words, he can be interested in the past, either for its own sake, or as the parent of the present. Similarly, he may be interested in static

views of various past scenes and happenings, or he may be interested principally in the moving stream of events, the causal and evolutionary aspect of the history of mankind.

I will say a little about these two aspects of history separately. First, the value to the reader of discovering what life was like in various ages and countries of old: this kind of intellectual curiosity can in our day be satisfied more fully and more correctly than in any previous age, because of the wonderful work of modern scholarship. It is a relief to escape from our own mechanical age into a world when the craftsman was more and the machine less, when imagination was more and science was less. Nor is this mere hedonistic escapism. It enlarges the mind and imagination, otherwise imprisoned in the present. We get glimpses of other worlds, human and faulty like ours, but different from our own, and suggesting many things, some of great value, that man has thought, experienced and forgotten. Indeed, I know of no greater triumph of the modern intellect than the truthful reconstruction of past states of society that have been long forgotten or misunderstood, recovered now by the patient work of archaeologists, antiquarians and historians. To discover in detail what the life of man on earth was like a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand years ago is just as great an achievement as to make ships sail under the sea or through the air.

How wonderful a thing it is to look back into the past as it actually was, to get a glimpse through the curtain of old night into some brilliantly lighted scene of living men and women, not mere creatures of fiction and imagination, but warm-blooded realities even as we are. In the matter of reality, there is no difference between past and present; every moment a portion of our prosaic present drops off and is swallowed up into the poetic past.

The motive of history is at bottom poetic. The patient scholar, wearing out his life in scientific historical research, and the reader more idly turning the pages of history are both enthralled by the mystery of time, by the mutability of all things, by the succession of the ages and generations.

The best expression of the sense of poetry in the annals of the past was given by Carlyle, in his *French Revolution*, his *Past and Present* and his *Essay of Boswell's Johnson*.

"History after all," he writes, "is the true poetry; Reality, if rightly interpreted, is grander than Fiction; nay even, in the right interpretation of Reality and History, does genuine Poetry lie.

Thus for *Boswell's Life of Johnson* has Time done, is Time still doing, what no ornament of Art or Artifice could have done for it. Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling James *were*, and *are not*. Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre Tavern still stands in Fleet Street: but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, pot-bellied Landlord; its rosy-faced assiduous Landlady, with all her shining brass-pans, waxed tables, well-filled larder-shelves; her cooks and bootjacks, and errand boys and watery-mouthed hangers-on? Gone! Gone! The becking Waiter, who, with wreathed smiles, was wont to spread for Samuel and Boszy their supper of the gods, has long since pocketed his last sixpence; and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The Bottles they drank out of are all broken, the Chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt; the very Knives and Forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the indiscriminate clay. All, all has vanished; in very deed and truth, like that baseless fabric of Prospero's air-vision. Of the Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain there; of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain; and these also decaying (were they of adamant), only slower. The mysterious River of Existence rushes on; a new Billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever round the old embankments; but the former Billow with its loud, and eddyings, where is it?—Where?—

Now this *Book* of Boswell's, this is precisely a revocation of the edict of Destiny; so that Time shall not utterly, not so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us. A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past: they who are gone are still here; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they yet speak. There it shines, that little miraculously lamp-lit Pathway; shedding its feeble and feeble twilight into the boundless dark Oblivion, for all that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us: on which miraculous little Pathway we can still travel and see wonders" (*Critical Essays*, 4).

Such is the value of biography and of all history.

So, too, the finest thing ever said about the French Revolution was also said by Carlyle.

"The Fireship is old France, the old French Form of Life; her crew a Generation of men. Wild are their cries and their ragings there, like spirits tormented in that flame. But, on the whole, are they not *gone*, O Reader? Their Fireship and they, frightening the world, have sailed



away; its flames and its thunders quite away, into the Deep of Time. One thing therefore History will do: pity them all; for it went hard with them all" (*French Revolution*, iii, 2).

We, I think, can appreciate that figure, sailing away as we are, on our own burning fireship, "into the Deep of Time."

Besides the contemplation and study of the Past for its own sake, there remains the second great value of History, namely the light it throws on the present. You cannot understand your own country, still less any other, unless you know something of its history. You cannot even understand your own personal opinions, prejudices and emotional reactions unless you know what is your heritage as an Englishman, and how it has come down to you. Why does an Englishman react one way to a public or private situation, a German another way, a Frenchman in a third way? History alone can tell you.

In this stage of the world, when many nations are brought into close and vital contact for good and evil, it is essential, as never before, that their gross ignorance of one another should be diminished, that they should begin to understand a little of one another's historical experience and resulting mentality. It is a fault of the English to expect the people of other countries to react as they do themselves to political and international situations. Our genuine good will and good intentions are often brought to nothing, because we expect other people to be like ourselves. This would be corrected if we knew their history, not necessarily in detail but in broad outlines of the social and political conditions which have given to each nation its present character.

You cannot understand the French unless you know something of the French Revolution, its causes and effects; or the Germans (who, bad as they are, have got to be explained and realized), without knowing something of the historical relation of the German to his government, and of the German government to the Army, and of the whole nation to military ideals, as potent and precious to them as Parliamentary institutions (and freedom to do whatever we like) have, in the long course of history, become to us English. You cannot understand the Russians unless you have some conception of the long centuries during which they were hammered into the sense of community by the continual

blows of Tartar and Teuton invasion sweeping over the unbroken Steppes. We are always expecting other countries to "Play the game" as we play it, to see life as we see it, and when they do not we are surprised and helpless. The present is always taking us by surprise (as it did in 1938-9) because we do not sufficiently know and consider the past.

Mr. Ford, it is commonly reported, once declared that history was "bunk." This remarkable utterance of his, if indeed he made it, was in itself an outcome of history: such contempt for all things past, and such engaging frankness in avowing it were themselves the outcome of certain aspects of the social history of the United States in the nineteenth century. Yet the American, generally speaking, is by no means ignorant of history or uninfluenced by his knowledge of it. The Americans know more about our history than we know about theirs, though I hope that will soon be remedied. And the American's conception of his own country, his pride in the star-spangled banner, and in the constitution, and in America as the representative of freedom and of democracy, are products of history as popularly taught and conceived over there. His attitude towards Britain, both in its favourable and in its unfavourable aspect, is largely an outcome of historical reading and teaching.

There is, indeed, another political danger that arises out of imperfect historical knowledge. I mean the danger that comes, not from deliberate propaganda or falsification, but from learning bits of past history without bringing the story up to recent and present times. The Americans, for example, tend to think of England as she was long ago, as a monarchical and aristocratic country. Their knowledge of our past is greater than their knowledge of our present. A few months ago, a friendly and intelligent American officer said to me that when he first came over to England for this war he expected to find a land of castles with serfs tilling the soil for the benefit of a feudal aristocracy. I told him that his historical knowledge of England would have been suitable if he had come over to lend a hand in the *earlier* part of the Hundred Years War.

Some nations, like the Irish, are *too* historically minded, in the sense that they cannot get out of the past at all. And many of the

countries of Eastern Europe, and above all the Germans themselves, have been brought up on one-sided, ultra-patriotic versions of things past. The harm that one-sided history has done in the modern world is immense. When history is used as a branch of propaganda it is a very deadly weapon. On the whole, that is not a fault of history as it is now taught and written in England. It is rather the ignorance of history than the misuse of it, from which we suffer in this island now.

Professor Butterfield, in his inaugural lecture for the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge, said last winter:

"Nations do remember one thing and another in the past. And so terrible are the evils of a little history that we must have more history as quickly as we can. And since one of the most dangerous devices of propaganda at the present day—by far the neatest trick of the year—is to narrate what the foreigner once did, while withholding everything in the nature of historical explanation, we must have more of the kind of history which is not mere narrative but exposition—the history which takes account of the differences between the centuries, between stages of intellectual development, even between types of social structure. The study of history matters, not because it turns men into statesmen—that at least is a thing which it palpably does not do (valuable though it may be when added to the other qualifications of a political leader)—but because in every genuine victory that it gains, it is contributing to the growth of human understanding."

These words of Professor Butterfield lead us on from consideration of history as a means of acquiring positive knowledge, to history as an education of the mind of the reader. We become wiser—less foolish at any rate—if we study the problems of humanity in past ages, because we can read without violent *partis pris* about the things of long ago, and with knowledge of their outcome and consequence. It is still too early to form a final judgment on the French Revolution, and opinions about it (my opinion certainly) is constantly oscillating. On such great and complex issues there can never be a final "verdict of history." But at least it is more possible to have an opinion of some value about the French Revolution now than it was in 1789, 1794 or 1815. And the attempt to form such an opinion in all the historical light now available is an education to the mind, the sort of education we all most terribly need.

Our own daily affairs, political and social, we approach with

strong prejudices, with ignorance or one-sided knowledge of the issues, and with no knowledge at all of what is going to be the outcome. To remedy this, the reading of history instills into us the habit of surveying broadmindedly and calmly the pageant and process of human affairs. I do not mean that we should be "impartial" in the sense of thinking that all sides in the past were equally in the right. We may, and we often should, feel that one side was on the balance much more in the right than the other. And we shall not all of us come to the same conclusions on these past problems. But if we calmly study the past from as many angles as possible, we shall all of us gain in wisdom and understanding. We shall acquire a mentality which, when we return to our own problems, will be less at the mercy of newspapers and films, trying to make us take short cuts to truth, and to oversimplify the tangled skein of human affairs.

I hope I have begun to make out to your satisfaction my case for the twin proposition (1) that it is part of the duty of historians to present history in a readable form, or rather, in a variety of forms readable by various sections of the public, for in Clio's house are many mansions; and (2) that the general reader ought to study history. If he knows no history he is not properly educated either as a citizen or as an intellectual and imaginative being. But of course few readers will study history because they think it is a patriotic duty to do so, or even because they want to improve their minds. Readers read because they like reading, and the books they choose will be those that interest or delight them. People will read history if it fascinates them. It is therefore the duty of historians to make it as fascinating as possible, or at any rate not to conceal its fascination under the heap of learning which ought to underlie but not overwhelm written history.

And how fascinating history is—the long, variegated pageant of man's still continuing evolution on this strange planet, so much the most interesting of all the myriads of spinners through space. Man's evolution is far more extraordinary than the first chapter of Genesis used to lead people to suppose. Man's history, prehistoric, ancient, mediaeval and modern, is by far the most wonderful thing in the universe of which any news has come through to us. It contains religion; it contains science; at least it contains

their history. It contains art and literature. The story of man is far more wonderful than the wonders of physical science. It is a mystery unsolved, yet it is solid fact. It is divine, diabolic—in short, human. “The proper study of mankind is man,” more proper to him than even the study of beetles, of gases, and of atoms. And this wonderful pageant can be viewed both in rapidly revolving films of large expanses of time and space, and in “close-ups” of single people and single scenes.

## ESSAYS

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### MARGINAL COMMENT

by HAROLD NICOLSON

ON A CERTAIN morning during the past week I reached the age of sixty. That is a formidable thing to happen. On the Wednesday night I had retired to rest, a mere stripling of fifty-nine with a promising future before me: but when the grey dawn of Thursday crept through the lattice it brought with it, not a Diamond Jubilee feel, but that iron figure LX, setting a grim seal on all my hopes. It is no help at all that my friends should assure me that, honestly speaking, I do not look a day over fifty; such remarks are kind, they are polite; but they are not rejuvenating. I remember an octogenarian once saying to me: "Old age would be intolerable did it not arrive so gradually." But there was no gradualness at all about Thursday morning; the thing had come to me suddenly in the passing of a single night: *junior fui etenim senui*: there was no more to be said. In two or three years from now, in a few months maybe, I shall feel the bony fingers of decrepitude clutching at my frame. Already the first shade of deafness is creeping over me; I find myself saying "Really!" and "Fancy that!" in the hope of avoiding the too constant iteration of that one word "What?" In five years, in six years, I may lose even my gift of curiosity, that happy little bird which has fluttered beside me all these decades. And will my sense of excitement also leave me, so that I cease to care what Tiridates threatens and fail to notice the blackness of the ash-buds in March? Better than that, let death come suddenly and as a blow in the night. For what compensations are there for this

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irreparable outrage? There are no compensations. I have no desire whatsoever that my passions should be spent; I liked my passions very much indeed. I do not want to be venerable; it seems to me a dull thing to be. It may be that my judgements will gain in weight and authority; but I do not care for judgements that have put on weight; I prefer them to be slim and mobile. I should not wish to be an elder statesman; I should like to be a young statesman. I see no advantage in being sixty: I wish I wasn't.

There is, however, one thin line of comfort which I can derive. I calculate that, had I not reached the age of sixty on November 21st, 1946, I should not have been born on November 21st, 1886: and that, had I not arrived during the reign of Queen Victoria, I should not have experienced the intricate changes which have rendered these sixty years the most interesting of all periods of transition. It is not merely that I have been privileged to witness many important transformations; it is that those who were born before the invention of the internal combustion engine inherited the atmosphere of the past; whereas those who were born after that unfortunate event can possess only a sense of the present and the future. My parents, when I was a little boy, lived in Morocco. There was no electric light in our small town, there were no wheeled vehicles; I would return from some Christmas festival mounted upon a horse with a servant preceding me with a lantern. The beams of this flickering light would fall, now upon some iron-studded door in a blank wall, now upon a street fountain spluttering upon coloured tiles, and now upon a rat creeping from an open sewer. My horse would pick his way carefully through the mud and garbage; suddenly a door would open in the silent street, disclosing a small courtyard, with a lamp hanging from the colonnade, its wick smoking angrily across the arches. The lamp was shaped as are the lamps of Pompeii.

It is not the glamour of the East which that smoking lamp recalls to me, it is the life of Rome and Athens. Around the outer courtyard there would be square bare rooms, with a small light upon the window-ledge and, upon the floor, matting and embroidered cushions. A negro slave would be stewing little white beans over a charcoal brazier; from the inner courtyard would

come the giggling of the women. Someone would throw a sprig of dried sage upon the brazier, and its smoke would mingle blue and pungent with the black smoke of the hanging lamp. My host had all the *gravitas* of the Roman patrician, his gestures were deliberate; at moments, with a slow and accustomed movement, he would sweep the folds of his toga back from his forearm; in his hand he held a small ebony phial of spice. Even so, through silent redolent streets, would Atticus have been carried to the house of Cicero, and even so did Socrates, "fresh from the bath and wearing his best pair of slippers," walk slowly towards the house of Agathon. In those streets today electric bulbs beat harshly upon the little walls, the hoot of motor horns drowns the laughter in the harem. But I have taken part in the Symposium: I know exactly what sort of pattern the lantern of Alcibiades swung crazily along the walls. What understanding have our children, born in the machine age, of the way that people travelled when there were no trains, or motor-cars or aeroplanes or even roads? The long desert track winds slowly, and when evening comes the dust-devils cease their whirling and the mirages no longer glimmer with their lakes and palms. One knows the crumbling caravanserai, the smell of camel-thorn burning, the little group of tents under the stars; one knows how Marco Polo eased his tired limbs, and lay awake thinking of the Giudecca and listening to the camels grunting to each other in the dark.

Even if it were possible for our young men to escape the fumes of petrol, to plunge deep into the Yemen or the Hadramaut, and thus to touch beneath their fingers the texture of another age; even if this be possible, they will never see the eighteenth and the seventeenth centuries re-enacting themselves before their eyes. They will not watch, as I have watched, a King bend down to wash the feet of twelve beggars, with priests around him swinging golden censers and chanting Latin hymns. They will not run, as I have run, beside the carriage of an old lady, crouched deep among the cushions of her barouche, of an old Queen-Empress whose eyes were cross and tired behind her silver spectacles, and who had been born before Byron died. They will not see a Tsar of Russia walk hurriedly from the Winter Palace and bless the waters of the Neva, seeming so small, so small, among the scarlet



giants of his Cossack guard. They will not meet people who had bowed to Napoleon's widow or who had driven in their own yellow carriages from Calais to Rome. They will not remember, even, when the first six London taxis, shaped like cabriolets, were parked in Knightsbridge; in their ears will never echo the happy jingle of a hansom cab. They will not be able to recall, as I can recall, the first time that they rode in a motor-car, or how the people rushed to the doors to watch this strange mechanical dog-cart clatter by. To them such words as "mutoscope" or "bioscope" will be meaningless, nor will they remember the day when the first faint notes of the wireless spluttered in the ear-phones. Nor will they be able, as I was able, to scribble in the margin of a book: "It was at this moment that I saw my first aeroplane." Now that the world has become too wonderful, they will lose their sense of wonder. Now that everything has become possible, the impossible has lost its glamour.

I should have been denied these curious experiences had I not lived for sixty years. It is certainly some comfort in my affliction to remind myself that I knew the world before the internal combustion engine came to spoil it. But this slight solace is marred for me by the reflection that the twentieth century is more interesting than the nineteenth. It was in no way stimulating to wear a top hat on Sundays and to leave cards in Grosvenor Square. I do not really believe that the present generation are to be pitied because they will never see four Court Chamberlains walking downstairs backwards with lighted candelabra in their hands. It gives me a mild pleasure to realize that I understand the past better than they ever will. But what I most desire is to see this social revolution discover its own formula; I want to watch the lava cool; and since that will take twenty years at least, I regret that the figure LX should have stamped itself upon me so suddenly, so soon.

## THE HAUNTING OF CLONMACNOISE

by MERVYN WALL

IT IS RELATED in the Annals that for the first five centuries after its foundation by the blessed Kiernan the monastic settlement of Clonmacnoise enjoyed a singular immunity from the visitation of silvans and satyrs, night fiends, goblins and all sort of hellish phantoms which not unseldom appear to men. Within the sound of its bells the dark operations of magic were unknown, for no witch, sorcerer or charmer could abide the sanctified air. Other religious settlements were sadly plagued by disembodied spirits, demons, lemures and fauns snorting and snuffling most fiendishly in the darker corners of the corridors and cells, and it was not unusual for a monk to be seriously injured or lamed as a result of their mischiefs and devilments. Philomaths of the profoundest erudition, century after century poring over the great elephant folios in the library, shook their heads and warned their brethren that they could not expect to be always immune from such visitants, and that if the Prince of Darkness did but once gain a footing, he would be aflame with the thwarted malice of centuries. But the monks put their trust in the blessed Kiernan and in their own sanctity, and it may have been their presumption in this regard that at last opened the door to the pestilential demons which, toward the close of the eleventh century, thronged to Clonmacnoise from their horrible and shadowy dens.

The holy place had its first indication that its defenses had been breached when one October evening Father Killian, who

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had the care of the monastery brewery, emerged from his place of work to take the air for a few minutes before returning to the main building for vespers. He had worked diligently all day, and the night air was pleasant on his heated face. It was a dark night, and he experienced some difficulty in finding his way between the cells and huts to the palisade which surrounded the settlement. When he reached it at last, he stood for a long time looking across the fields towards the river, invisible in the darkness. It was very quiet; nothing was to be heard but the regular grunting of a monk in a nearby cell, who was plying his discipline with more than usual determination.

Suddenly the moon came from behind a cloud, the river flashed silver, there was a blast of pestilential wind, and Father Killian became aware of a huge swarthy cacodemon sitting on the palisade some paces from where he stood. The face of this hideous specter was turned back to front, and it was actually eating and crunching red-hot coals and other dangerous matters with its teeth.

Father Killian, knowing that it was always ominous to see such a creature and that it was best not curiously to meddle, would have taken to his heels if his legs had obeyed him, but they were paralyzed with terror, which was by no means allayed when the hellish goblin, swinging itself suddenly from the palisade, took up a position beside him, and in an ingratiating manner began to tempt him to deny God and curse the Abbot. When the startled monk found his voice it was to begin a devout recitation of the Psalms, whereupon the demon seized him by the throat in a fearful grip and well-nigh throttled him. He lifted Father Killian and flung him against the base of the round tower thirty yards away, and then letting out a hideous yell, the creature vanished in a foul black smoke, leaving behind him so intolerably stinking and malignant a scent as is beyond all imagination and expression.

The fiend's parting scream brought the monks from their cells like a swarm of bees, and compressing their nostrils between their forefingers and thumbs by way of protection against the horrid and noisome stench, they made their way through the murky smoke to carry the unconscious Killian back to the monastery.

Three hours later the Abbot, returning to Clonmacnoise by boat from a day's fishing on Lough Derg, found the settlement in turmoil. The entire community crowded around him as he took his chair in the chapter house, and the white-faced Killian was carried in and propped against a wall where the Abbot could see him with convenience. The Abbot listened with some impatience to the chatter of the affrighted monks before sternly dismissing them to their beds; and then, having ascertained that Father Killian was capable of speech, he helped him to a chair and slowly drew the story from him.

"Hm!" said the Abbot. "How can you be certain that it was not the false impression of a timid and fretful imagination?"

Father Killian assured him that it was not, and showed his bruises and the mark of the fiend's nails upon his throat.

"I still don't believe it," said the Abbot, but seeing the indignation in the monk's face, he added charitably:

"You are the best brewer we have ever had in Clonmacnoise, but I have thought of late that from excess of zeal you are inclined to overwork. That might perhaps account for your hallucination. I think I will take you out of the brewery and put you in charge of the poultry, where you will find the work more agreeable to your present nervous state." And the Abbot, who was renowned far and wide for his kindness, assisted the still dazed Killian across to his cell and into bed, and left him with a promise to remember him in his prayers.

On the following morning a dish of broken food was put into Killian's hand, and he was led into the poultry house, while the brewery was committed to the care of a father of noted piety, who many years before had made a vow never to drink anything but water. The Abbot assembled the community and lectured them gravely on their childishness and their lack of faith in the blessed Kiernan. When he had brought his address to a firm and dignified finish, the monks and novices dispersed to their daily tasks somewhat reassured, though an inclination to glance over their shoulders remained with them during the day.

About the hour of sunset a sudden shower of fish, which fell from the heavens like hail, occasioned the Abbot certain disquiet. During the night hoarse coughs and deep sighs were heard in the passages, followed by the barking and baying of giant dogs. On

the following morning an octogenarian monk made his way into the Abbot's presence, with the help of two sticks, to complain of the presence in his cell during the night of an evil spirit in the form of a beautiful harlot, bravely dressed, who with mincing gait and lewd gestures had tempted him to fornication. This sequence of inexplicable events forced the Abbott to the conclusion that the monastery was badly haunted.

During the day the Abbot studied the subject in the library with the help of the apprehensive custodian, and at nightfall every monk, student and novice was assembled in the great church. As he faced them and looked at their white faces strained and tired from lack of sleep, the Abbot felt an immense pity for his spiritual children. A shudder passed through the community as he took for his text the words from the thirteenth chapter of Isaias: "Fauns, Satyrs and the hairy ones shall dance in their palaces."

"The day of battle is at hand," began the Abbot. "The Evil One has gained entrance to the holy city of Clonmacnoise." He went on to warn them of the sinuous cunning of the Fiend, who has a myriad devices at his command, and whose minions might be expected to appear in the guise of goats, hares or horned owls. If in their cells they were to hear most lamentable moan and outcry proceeding from some invisible source, they might shrewdly suspect a manifestation. If an evil spirit did manifest itself, they should be armed to address and speak to it, and should adjure the specter in the name of God, if it were of God, to speak; if not, to begone. "Should a ghastly apparition suddenly confront you, be not overconfident in yourselves and presumptuously daring, but fervently recommend yourselves to God. A valiant warrior of Christ is always armed with the buckler of faith and the breast-plate of hope. Dread particularly the fiend who appears in another guise, fascinating your senses and deluding you with glamour. A stoup of holy water is most healthful and efficacious, and a sure protection against the malice and attacks of unclean spirits." At the conclusion of the sermon holy water and books of exorcism were distributed to all.

The monks went slowly to their cells, their minds filled with apprehension. Before long, restless spirits could be heard groaning and sighing in the passages. About midnight the first explosion

occurred. Father Samson had observed a pale bleeding wraith, which crooned softly as it attempted to draw and switch away the quilt and blankets from his bed. As he did not deem its answer to his adjuration satisfactory, he gave it a slash of holy water, which caused it to explode and disappear through the ceiling in a sheet of flame, setting fire to the thatch in its passage upwards. An unearthly silence followed, but before long other distant rumblings were heard, and soon the monastery was filled with smoke, noise and the smell of sulphur.

When the bell rang for matins the monks came from their cells a little haggard and shaken, but with renewed confidence. Everywhere that the enemy had manifested himself he had been beaten. Father Leo had spent the night struggling with an incubus, but as Leo had been a wrestler at the court of the King of Thomond before he entered the cloister, he had been well able for his adversary. Brother Patrick had been caused annoyance by a huge black dog hideous to look upon, barking at him from a corner of his cell. As Patrick had been too terrified to reach for the holy water, the demon had remained until the crowing of the first cock; but the lay brother had suffered no inconvenience other than loss of sleep, and Brother Patrick remarked philosophically: "I wouldn't have slept in any case." Other monks had been scandalized by the presence of damsels of excessive comeliness, who had succeeded in divesting themselves of the greater part of their clothing before the fathers could find the right page in the books of exorcism. A suave gentleman of swarthy aspect, thought to be the Prince of Darkness himself, had actually had the audacity to try to tempt the Master of Novices and had got very much the worse of the encounter.

The Abbot, who again spent the morning in the library and was beginning to find the subject interesting, assembled the community once more and warned them of the further evil sleights and tricks the Fiend might be expected to have at his command. He admonished them particularly to beware of complacency, an injunction which most of the brethren were inclined to think unnecessary. During the afternoon the Abbot was grieved to receive applications from many of his monks for permission to leave the monastery for varying periods in order to visit sick

relatives and aged parents whom the applicants accused themselves of having sinfully neglected for many years. He sternly turned down all such representations, and the applicants set themselves to the business of learning the exorcism and adjurations by heart, and looked to the oncoming night with doleful foreboding.

For fifteen successive days Clonmacnoise was haunted horribly. It became commonplace for a monk on turning a corner to be confronted by a demon who saluted him with cuffs and blows. Hydras, scorpions, ounces and pards frequented the cells, and serpents filled the passages with their hissings and angry sibilations. The nights were hideous with a horrid hubbub, a clattering of wrenching doors, and the howls and shrieks of invisible beings.

On the sixteenth day a sullen deputation of elderly monks waited on the Abbot.

"It's not the look of the demons I mind," said Father Crustaceous. "A sentence or two of Latin soon disperses them. It's the lack of sleep."

"I don't mind the ones on two legs or even four," said Father Placidus, "but I can't abide loathly worms and dragons."

"The long and short of it," said another hard-bitten veteran, "is that we're of the opinion that it's time for you in your capacity as Abbot to bind these hellish sprites to the bottom of Lough Derg."

The Abbot did not appear to have heard the remark.

"The learned Gaspar Diefenbach has written at length on the subject," he murmured absently.

"There is a sort of feeling in the monastery," said Father Crustaceous grimly, "that our affliction by these fearful demons may be due to a lack of proper sanctity in high places."

The Abbot's fingers played nervously with a heavy folio of Cornelius Atticus.

"I will not do anything with unbecoming haste," he said shortly. "I must give some time to reflection and prayer."

Muttering, the deputation shuffled out of the cell.

Two days later, before the Abbot had completed his meditations, the haunting suddenly ceased. A free and balmy air pervaded Clonmacnoise, an expression of relief, almost of gaiety,

manifested itself in every face, the monks went about their work with a lighter tread. Credit was generously given to the Abbot, for it was believed that the deliverance was due to his prayers. No doubt he had taken up the matter very seriously with the blessed Kiernan, who, after all, could scarcely turn a deaf ear to the representations of his own abbot; and, of course, everyone knew how powerful was the influence exercised by Kiernan in Heaven. In anything touching Clonmacnoise he was always called in for consultation; it would be discourteous to ignore him when great decisions were to be taken affecting his own foundation. The Abbot, though he said little, seemed to be satisfied that he had managed matters very well with Heaven, so that it was with considerable chagrin that he listened to the halting story of a wretched lay brother on his knees at the Abbot's feet three days later.

Brother Fursey possessed the virtue of Holy Simplicity in such a high degree that he was considered unfit for any work other than paring turnips in the monastery kitchen, and even at that, it could not truthfully be claimed that he excelled. The cook, a man of many responsibilities, was known on occasion to have been so wrought up by Brother Fursey's simplicity as to threaten him with a ladle. The lay brother never answered back, partly because in the excess of his humility he believed himself to be the least of men, and partly because of an impediment in his speech which rendered him tongue-tied when in a state of excitement or fright. So it came to pass that for three whole days the wretched lay brother kept his alarming knowledge to himself through sheer terror at the thought of having to face the Abbot. While all Clonmacnoise believed that the satanic hordes had taken their departure, one man alone knew that they had not.

When the settlement had first been plagued by demons, Brother Fursey in common with everyone else, had been strongly moved to perturbation and alarm, but when night after night had passed, and the first week had crept into the second, without his having been maltreated or batooned, or even seeing a demon in the shape of beast or bird, he happily concluded that his soul was too mean to excite the avarice of Hell. So while the rest of the community sweated and prayed, Brother Fursey, convinced of his own worthlessness, slept blissfully beneath his blankets; but on the very first night during which the others were untroubled by devilish mani-



festations, the door of Brother Fursey's cell was suddenly and violently flung open. The lay brother started into a sitting position and fixed his eyes on the open doorway with some misgiving, for he knew that it was unlucky for the door of a chamber to open of its own accord and nobody to enter. He had been sitting thus for some time when an ungainly creature of the gryphon family ambled in from the corridor and casting a disdainful glance at the startled monk, sat down in the center of the floor. It wheezed once or twice as if its wind were broken, and gloomily contemplated the resultant shower of sparks which fell in every corner of the cell. Appalled at such a foul sight Brother Fursey fell back against his pillows. When he roused himself again he felt that he was like to lose his wits, for a seemingly endless procession of four- and six-legged creatures of most uninviting aspect was shuffling in through the doorway and disposing itself about the floor. An incubus followed, and clambering on to the bed, seated itself without much apparent enthusiasm astride Brother Fursey's chest. The lay brother was by this time so nigh driven frantic by fear that he scarcely noticed the galaxy of undraped females of surpassing loveliness who assembled in a corner and appeared to be exchanging gossip while they tidied up their hair. Lastly there entered a black gentleman who walked with a slight limp. He carefully closed the door behind him and advancing to the head of the bed, saluted the lay brother politely. Brother Fursey's brains simmered in his head as he tried to remember the form of adjuration, but the only words that he could bring to mind were those of the Abbot's injunction: "Be not over-confident in yourself and presumptuously daring." The sable gentleman signed to the incubus to give place, whereupon grunting horribly, it slid off Brother Fursey's chest and, waddling across the room on its bandy legs, seated itself astride the *prie-dieu*. The dark stranger sat on the edge of the bed and addressed the monk with affability.

"You have no occasion to be alarmed," he said. "You must regard this as a friendly visit."

Brother Fursey's eyes rolled agonizingly towards the stoup of holy water on the adjoining table.

"Now, now," said the Devil shaking his head reprovingly, "you mustn't do that. Even if you can nerve your arm to stretch it forth from beneath the bedclothes, I would point out that in the

past fortnight myself and the children have acquired considerable dexterity in skipping out of the way of a slash of that nasty, disagreeable stuff, especially when it is cast by a shaky hand. Now," he continued, "I expect that you are mildly exercised as to the reason for this seemingly discourteous interruption of your sleeping hours. We had no choice, Brother Fursey, we had no choice. Never in all my experience as a devil have I encountered such obstinate sanctity as exists in this monastery. The boys are half-blinded with holy water and completely worn out. They need a rest, a little while to recuperate before returning to the fight, newly armed with the experience they have gained, the next time to succeed and to wipe out forever this sickly plague spot of womanish men and chanting monkdom." Here the archfiend grated his teeth horribly, and lightnings danced in his eyes; but he glanced down in a manner by no means unfriendly at the wisp of hair and the two button-like eyes above the quilt, which was all that could be seen of Brother Fursey.

"To compress the matter into a nutshell," continued His Highness, "I admit that my forces have been worsted in the first encounter, but I am not the sort of demon to retire with my tail between my legs and meekly allow the victory to my opponents. My troops are in need of rest and rearmament, that is all. What with the smell of incense, the splashing of holy water and the sound of the Latin language, there is no safety for any of us in this settlement elsewhere than in your cell, where due to the happy chance of your having an impediment in your speech, we are in no danger of being suddenly ejected by a string of Latin or a shrewd adjuration, into the outer air, which is a different sort of place entirely. If I were to withdraw my legions altogether for recuperation to a clime more salubrious and more welcome to their natures, that dull fellow you have for Abbot would be up to some game such as a sevenfold circuit of the bounds of the settlement with chantings and bells so as to render our return difficult, if not altogether impossible. I intend keeping a foothold in Clonmacnoise until I clear it of its pale inhabitants. Your cell is our sanctuary. You, my dear Fursey, are our bridgehead."

For a few moments there was silence broken only by the chattering of the monk's teeth. Then a choking sound became audible

from beneath the quilt. The black gentleman withdrew a pace with some distaste.

"I beg of you," he said coldly, "to give over your attempts at prayer. You know well that your fright is such as to render you incapable of the formation of a single syllable. We are both men of the world, and a ready acceptance of the position will do much credit to your common sense and make for mutual respect. And now, to show you that I am not ungenerous, but am willing to repay your hospitality, I should like to do something for you. Purely as a matter of accounting and to keep my books straight, I shall as a man of business, of course, require your soul in exchange. It is not a very valuable soul, its market value would be small; but you won't find me haggling over the price. Are you perhaps a lover of beauty?"

The demon waved his hand, and a queue of desirable females began to move monotonously across the cell from the door to the far wall, where they disappeared through the plaster. The monk gave vent to a deep groan and closed his eyes tightly. When he re-opened them with due caution, his visitor was regarding him with professional interest.

"You have been a long time in a world of wattled huts and whitewashed cells," he said. "Do you never long for the freedom you once had, to climb the hills and move through the woods just as you please? The breeze was pleasant when you were a boy, the forests were full of mystery, and you had a great liking for paddling your feet in the fords of rivers. All the length of a summer day you had to yourself, with no one to say 'Fursey, do this' or 'Fursey, do that.' " Immediately a bird call was heard and the gurgling of streams. A silvan sounded a few hesitant notes on a rustic pipe, and the cell became full of heavenly fragrance and sweet odors.

The demon studied the lay brother's reactions in his staring eyes and twitching forehead. It was all he could see of the monk, who had the bedclothes drawn up to the bridge of his nose.

"I'm afraid your tastes are vulgar," said the fiend with some disappointment. "What about a mighty reputation as a warrior?" Brother Fursey became aware of the clash and clamor of battle, the heartening burst of trumpets, and the brave flash of colored cloaks as swords were wielded. At this point the lay brother lost

consciousness, for his was a timorous nature and he had always been adverse to violence.

For three days the wretched Fursey crept about the monastery as in a trance. He spoiled hundreds of turnips and pared large slices of flesh from his thumbs. He would certainly have fallen foul of Brother Cook but for the latter's exceeding good humor resultant on the departure of a poltergeist which had made itself at home in his cell and whose least prank had been to heave him out of bed several times during the night. It was only at the close of the third day that Brother Fursey gathered together his wits and the remnants of his courage, and came faltering into the Abbot's presence to fling himself at his feet. It took the lay brother a long time to stammer out his story. The Abbot heard him in silence sitting brooding in his great chair. At length he arose, uttered a sigh, and raising Fursey, bade him return to the kitchen. Then he summoned the elder fathers to council, and when they had assembled, he went on his knees.

"I accuse myself," he said, "of spiritual pride. In my foolish presumption I imagined that my wretched prayers had been efficacious. The clearance of the greater part of the settlement from fiendish visitants has, in fact, been due to the stalwart piety of you, my fathers, and of the rest of the community." Then not wishing to cause his monks further embarrassment by the sight of their Abbot so humbling himself before them, he got to his feet and resumed the abbatial chair. Alarm, and then consternation, manifested itself on every face as he related the lay brother's story. There was some toothless whispering among the fathers and a great nodding of bald heads; then Father Crustaceous spoke.

"None of us is without sin," he said, "and a man's sins concern only himself and Heaven. Let us proceed at once to consider how Brother Fursey may best be relieved of this intolerable burden, and these execrable fiends be dispersed and scattered once and for all. No doubt your lordship can now make arrangements to surround and lead them into captivity, preparatory to binding them securely to the bottom of Lough Derg."

The Abbot coughed.

"I am but a poor sinner," he said, "in sanctity the least among you. Many a man excelling me by far in piety has in the course

of such an operation been torn into small pieces, and the pieces dispersed no man knows where."

"If such should be your fate," said Father Placidus, "you would be assured of a martyr's crown. Your saintly successor would certainly not omit to plead at Rome the cause for your canonization."

"These matters are not easily put into execution," remarked the Abbot diffidently.

"It should at least be attempted," said Father Crustaceous.

"But how will the monastery benefit by my demise and subsequent raising to the altar, if the suggested operation be not efficacious in scattering the dread sprites that infest it? My saintly successor will be in an even worse plight with the horrid example of my failure before him."

The Master of Novices rose to his feet. "Fathers," he said, "this discussion is getting us nowhere. I am responsible for the spiritual care and well-being of our novices and students. I cannot but rejoice that the female demons who have displayed themselves with such disregard for decency in the cells of our impressionable youth now restrict their disgraceful activities to one cell only, and that cell the cell of a lay brother so grounded in piety as to be indifferent to their hellish charms. Let us leave well enough alone. Brother Fursey is winning for himself a celestial seat. Would you deprive him of it? Who knows but that the sufferings which he is at present enduring may not result in his speedy demise and assumption to his heavenly reward? He seems to me to be a man of poor constitution. With Fursey's happy translation heavenwards, the Archfiend will no longer have a foothold in Clonmacnoise."

"Is there not a danger," asked Father Placidus, "that Brother Fursey being subjected to such an assembly of the batteries of Hell may, before his constitution fails him, succumb to the unhallowed suggestions of the Evil One, and even form a compact with him detrimental to this holy foundation?"

"But," said the Novice Master, "I understand from our lord the Abbot that this lay brother is a man of such resolution and so charged with the seven virtues that he laughs to scorn the most insidious temptations that Hell has been able to devise."

"That is generally true," said the Abbot. "According to what Brother Fursej has related to me, only one suggestion of the Fiend appeared to him to have been even sensible. With more than diabolical cunning the Father of Lies represented to Brother Fursej the attractiveness of murdering Brother Cook by creeping on him unawares and tipping him into the cauldron of Tuesday soup. But as soon as this devilish suggestion was insinuated into Fursej's mind, his mental agony was such that he for once succeeded in bursting the bonds which impede his speech, and called aloud on the blessed Kiernan for aid, which aid was forthcoming with such little delay that the desire to kill faded instantly from Fursej's mind beneath the outpouring of grace which drowned and overwhelmed his soul. I think we may safely assume that now that Brother Fursej is aware of this chink in his armor, he will be forearmed to resist any infernal promptings in this regard to which he may be subjected."

"Nevertheless," said Father Placidus, "a word to Brother Cook would perhaps be not amiss. He should not turn his back to Brother Fursej, and it would be no harm to remove any choppers that may be lying around the kitchen."

"A good cook is hard to come by," muttered Father Crustaceous.

"It is agreed then," said the Master of Novices, "that the heroic Fursej continue to hold at bay the powers of darkness until his happy demise (which will deprive the Archfiend of his only foothold in Clonmacnoise) or until the blessed Kiernan powerfully intervenes on our behalf, whichever be the shorter. In the meantime the community should address itself urgently to prayer."

"And," added Father Crustaceous, "our lord the Abbot will no doubt make every effort to increase in sanctity, and in the intervals of his fastings and scourgings he will continue in his studies as to how demons are best fastened to the bottoms of lakes. Is that the position?"

"That is the position," said the Abbot shortly, and he dismissed the council.

When Brother Cook was informed of the grievous temptation to which his helpmate was exposed, he generously urged that it was not fitting that a man of Fursej's piety should be called upon

to perform the menial tasks of the kitchen. The Abbot, however, insisted that Brother Furseý continue his work among the turnips, whereupon the Cook respectfully petitioned for a transfer to the poultry house where Father Killian, who had never fully recovered from his grim experience, was not doing as well as might be desired. The Abbot curtly refused, and there was much grumbling at the deterioration in the cooking, due to Brother Cook's difficulty in keeping his mind on his work, and the fact that he spent most of his time with his back to the wall watching Brother Furseý.

A week passed, and a certain uneasiness began to pervade the settlement. It was true that Brother Furseý's hair was now white, but he showed no signs of dissolution; and it was not doubted but that the imps and ghouls were steadily recruiting their strength for a renewal of the assault. Every morning he was questioned by the Abbot as to the previous night's experiences, and he stammered out his story to the best of his ability. On Thursday he had been offered the crown and robes of the King of Cashel; on Friday, efforts had been made to beguile him with mellifluous verse and the promise of a reputation as a man of letters. On Saturday he had to be carried on a stretcher from his cell to the refectory; for Satan, losing all patience at the unfortunate lay brother's lack of interest in a shower of gold, had handed him over to four poltergeists to work their will on him; but by night-fall Brother Furseý had sufficiently recovered to be able to limp back to his cell with the aid of a borrowed crutch. The monks began to be horribly alarmed.

Father Crustaceous sucked hard at his one remaining tooth.

"There's nothing for it," he said. "Father Abbot must set about binding them to the bottom of Lough Derg. What's he hesitating about? Is he afraid they'll spoil the fishing?"

The old men rose with one accord and stumped and hobbled to the Abbot's cell.

"I won't do it," said the Abbot violently. "That's final. But," and he fixed his eyes on Father Crustaceous, "I have under consideration the allotting of the holy task to a father of greater sanctity than myself."

Father Crustaceous' mouth fell open. There was an uncomfort-

able silence, which was broken by the suave voice of the Master of Novices.

"I imagine matters can be arranged more suitably," he said, "and with satisfaction to all. We must expel Brother Fursey from Clonmacnoise before the horrid strangers that frequent his cell feel that they are strong enough once more to assail us. When Fursey is gone, their hold will be gone. There is no time to lose."

Every face brightened.

"Do you think it quite fair?" began the Abbot.

"Is he not a harbinger of demons?" asked Father Placidus hotly.

"Fair or not," said the Master of Novices, "we must consider the good of the greater number. Remember our innocent but perhaps imaginative novices subject at any moment to the onset of a bevy of undraped dancing girls."

Father Crustaceous uttered a pious ejaculation.

"So be it," said the Abbot, and he turned away.

Within a short space the astonished Fursey found himself led to the great gate that opens on The Pilgrims' Way. The Master of Novices pointed out to him his road and indicated that he was never to return. Brother Fursey wept and held on to the other's cloak, but the Novice Master broke his hold and left him with his blessings and the present of a second crutch.

On the side of the hill Fursey sat down in the heather and turned his red swollen eyes back to where the towers and cells of Clonmacnoise lay cluttered in a little heap beside the river. Lucifer came and stood beside him.

"If it would afford you any satisfaction," said that personage, "I will rive one of the round towers with a ball of fire. I regret that I am not allowed to damage the churches or cells."

"No," said the ex-monk, who now that there was no urgent necessity for him to speak, found that he could do so with reasonable fluency. "I wish you'd go away. You're the cause of all this." And he burst into a fresh fit of weeping.

The Devil hesitated. "What are you going to do?" he asked.

"What can I do?" moaned Fursey. "No religious settlement will admit me with the reputation I've acquired."

"The world is a fine broad place," said the Devil.

"What is there in it?" asked the ex-monk. "I looked at it long ago and left it."



"There are women, riches, fame and sometimes happiness."

Fursey raised his voice in a howl. "Are they there for a white-haired old man with a broken hip?"

"I'm sorry about the hip," said the Devil. "I assure you there was no personal ill-feeling."

"Have you not shown me such numbers of luscious and agreeable females that henceforth all women that I shall meet must seem to me hideous and in the highest degree undesirable? What are the little wealth and distinction that must be wrested from the world, to me who has rejected showers of gold and the thrones of kings? Demon, you have undone me."

Lucifer regarded him not unsympathetically.

"You should have come over to my side in the beginning," he said. "I'd have made you Abbot of that place, and we'd have wrecked it together."

The ex-monk emitted a dolorous moan.

"Give over this unmanly complaining," said the Devil with some impatience, but Fursey's only answer was: "What will become of me? What will become of me?"

"Well, if you're interested in the future," said the Fiend harshly, "I can tell you that. You have exactly a week to live. There is at present a nastiness between the King of Thomond and the King of Cashel. You, being a fool, will wander down into the middle of it; and on this day week one of the Thomond swordsmen will cleave you just for the fun of it and because he has nothing better to do. As for Clonmacnoise," said Lucifer turning on his cloven hoof to look down on its roofs and towers. "I was a fool to waste my time on it. It has another few centuries of life, a few hundred years of half-men at their cringing prayers; and then an army of their fellow Christians will come with sword and fire, and will leave it desolate."

## THE TENTH MUSE CLIMBS PARNASSUS

by ANTHONY ASQUITH

WHEN films were first made it was enough for us that the pictures moved at all. The mere sight of a man eating an apple pie delighted us, and if by some unholy miracle we were privileged to see that pie re-emerge from the man's mouth and form itself again into an unpunctured whole, we felt that the art of the cinema could scarcely go farther; but, after a time, the wonder wore off and we began to want a story. All good early films were films of physical action, because action was the easiest way in which movement can be alchemised into drama: all these early films led up to a climax in which the hero—usually a cowboy—"beats up" or more rarely (for he is a humane fellow) "bumps off" the villain who is about to consign the heroine to a fate which is called, erroneously I believe, "worse than death." The charm of these early films—and they had charm—lay in the movement: the riding, running, jumping, fighting, against beautiful natural backgrounds of desert and canyon. But before the climax was reached we had to know something about the characters in their relation to each other. This was got over in a few perfunctory scenes in which the hero registered "love" for the heroine, the heroine "disdain" for the hero, while the villain revealed the full blackness of his heart by the simple method of stroking his small black moustache.

After a time we began to want something more. If we were

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really to be excited by the outcome of the "chase" or "fight," we had to know the characters a little more intimately than the crude pantomime, played entirely in long shots, allowed. Up to this time, the characters had really nothing but their physical appearance to distinguish them from each other. They were shadows of a shadow, mere dumb simulacra, with nothing to relate them to life but their powers of movement, only one degree more living than the furniture—and no one can be interested for long by a fight-to-the-death between two armchairs, or the hazardous pursuit of a sofa by an ottoman.

The next step was taken by D. W. Griffith when he invented the "close-up." By doing so he immediately established a new relationship between the actor and the audience and, once and for all, cut the cinema loose from the stage. From now onwards the audience could be in as intimate contact with the actors as they were with one another over a tea-table; the faintest flicker of an eyelash, the least trembling of a lip could tell in a way that would be impossible in the theatre. Therefore, the actor's palette was endowed with a whole new range of colours, but he lacked one thing—a voice. So he was faced with a curious dilemma. In scenes which were naturally silent and dependent on gesture and facial expression he could afford to do much less than on the stage. In scenes which in the theatre required speech, he was forced, being dumb, to do much more. He was, in fact, obliged to over-act and under-act at the same time. Griffith solved this problem by inventing for his actors a style which bore something of the same relationship to ordinary life as verse, or poetical prose, does to ordinary speech. When, for example, Romeo hears the report of Juliet's death, he says, "Then I defy you, stars"; he is crystallising into words what in life would probably be an inarticulate cry of despair. Again, when Ferdinand, in *The Duchess of Malfi*, sees his sister dead—dead by his agency—he says, "Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle: she died young." Now, these words are not far removed from ordinary speech, but they have just that concentration of emotion, that raising of the temperature, which makes them speak, not only for Ferdinand, but for everyone pierced by sudden overwhelming remorse. Griffith does not rise to such heights, but, at his best, he was able to make his actors mime in a way which we recognize as like life, but with an

added degree of intensity which made it unnecessary for them to have voices.

Less skilful imitators began to make films which consisted almost entirely of large close-ups of actors registering "emotions" interspersed with long subtitles telling the audience what emotions they were registering. The first to discover that there were other means of conveying an emotion than the human face were the Germans. Up till then every director who wished to show that his heroine was frightened took a large close-up of her looking—frightened, and if, as was sometimes the case, his leading lady's registration of terror fell a little short, he put in a subtitle to the effect that: "Fear now clutches at Gloria's heartstrings with icy claw."

The German director not only made his heroine look frightened, he made what she saw appear frightening. He extracted from her fear a kind of emotional dye in which he steeped the whole picture; the design of the sets, the lighting, the angle of the camera all became actors in the drama instead of a background against which the drama was played.

This method is admirably suited to the expression of the darker and more violent emotions: terror, madness, lust; this was its natural territory, but it could not deal with the half-tones. Then Charlie Chaplin produced *A Woman of Paris*. Both Griffith and the Germans were primarily interested in the expression of mood and emotion. Their characters were either simple types or symbolic abstractions. With Chaplin, the focus shifts on to character; emotion is only interesting to him in so far as it throws light on the character of his people. In life we do not say, "How well that man registers anger," or "I don't think much of the way that woman registers grief." If we are detached observers we say, "That man hasn't much self-control," or "What a strong character that woman has." Naturally, the physical expression of emotion throws no light on the character of the person unless we know what emotion he is feeling. We do not know that the woman has a strong character unless we are let into the secret of her grief. This, then, was Chaplin's problem: both to make it clear to the audience that his people were feeling, and to leave them free to express their emotion in the way most in keeping with their characters, which might be by not showing any physical symptom at

all, or one so slight that its meaning would escape us unless we had a clue to its emotional source. He uses pictures, but he is never "pictorial" in the German sense—the drama is never conveyed by the actual composition of the picture. His screen is an impersonal, colourless sheet of glass through which we look. Even a well-composed picture would be out of key, because it would inevitably draw attention to itself as a picture, and the screen would cease to be the characterless window so essential to Chaplin's method. Through this window he shows us a series of segments, meaningless in themselves, but deriving significance from their juxtaposition. The drama is scarcely ever conveyed through any one scene, but implied in the relationship of that scene to its surroundings. Of course, this method would be as lifeless and arid as a jig-saw puzzle if it were not combined with Chaplin's brilliant eye for the quirks and quiddities of human behaviour and his sensitive understanding of the human heart. With Chaplin the details are never merely smart touches or "visual wise-cracks" as they so often become with his many imitators; they are always, in the true sense, imagined.

But while the film was gaining in its ability to convey mood, emotion and character, it was gradually losing touch with its life-source—movement. The Moving Picture was brought back to the screen by the Russian directors; in particular, Eisenstein and Pudovkin. Their films had much more in common with the old films of pure action and with Griffith, notably in his astonishing film *Intolerance*, than with the Germans or Chaplin. They proved that not only physical action but also mood and emotion can be expressed in terms of visual movement. Their method had this in common with Chaplin's—it was synthetic; that is to say, like Chaplin they constructed their films of small fragments, the significance of which lay in their relationship to each other, but, whereas with Chaplin that relationship was intellectual, with the Russians it was visual and rhythmic. There are two kinds of movement in a film: there is the movement of people or objects within the limits of a shot, i.e. any given section of a continuously photographed film, and the rhythmical relation of one shot to another, just as in music there is the rhythmical relation of notes within the limits of a bar or phrase, and the rhythmical relationship of bar to bar or phrase to phrase.

the two shots in ever-increasingly quick rhythm, the spectator gets in visual terms a metaphor of her agitation, and if, at the height of the oscillation of face and knife, the director cuts in a shot of a piston pulsating in exactly the same rhythm, he will be using what might be called a true visual metaphor, an image justified, not by its factual logic, but by its power to enrich the sum total of its neighbouring images by its associations and suggestions. Visual metaphor must not be confused with symbolism. Symbolism deals with abstract ideas; metaphor with concrete visual facts. For example, Griffith, who, in his weaker moments, had a *penchant* for the cruder symbolism, might well have been capable of cutting away from a scene in which the heroine was fighting for her honour with the villain, to a shot of an exceptionally lecherous cat assaulting a remarkably pure dove. These scenes gain nothing from juxtaposition, because they have, in fact, nothing in common but an arid abstraction: "bad men attack virtuous girls," "bad cats attack virtuous doves"; but even this bleak parallel does not hold good, because cats are not being bad in attacking doves, nor are doves being virtuous in resisting cats. But more important, the scenes have nothing *concrete* in common. There is no enrichment because they share no visible particularity, and works of art always deal in the concrete and particular and never in the abstract and general, otherwise it would be as easy to reproduce a Mozart symphony as a motor tyre. There are two kinds of visual metaphor: the first where the director, by special treatment of some factual detail in a scene, gives it the power to project the imagination of the spectator beyond itself, e.g. the emphasis of the drip of tea from the teacup in the imaginary scene just described must suggest, in the circumstances, the drip of blood from the unseen body. But there is another kind of metaphor where there is no factual connection at all, or rather, facts which the metaphor has in common with the scene of which it is a metaphor are facts of imagery and visual movement. We have said that it is uninteresting to symbolize a pure girl by a white dove and a bad man by a black cat, but it might be effective to intercut shots of a young girl running through the fields with the flight of a dove against the clouds because this would be the comparison of two parallel movements both of graceful young creatures. Each image would gain something from its neighbour,

and the combination would amount to more than the sum of its parts. Here the whiteness of the dove would be visibly parallel to the whiteness of the girl's dress, not abstractly symbolic of her pure heart.

The main contribution, then, of the Russian directors was the tremendous new force they injected into films by their understanding of the nature of film movement and their sensibility to dynamic, as opposed to static, pictorial qualities. The fault of most German films was that, although each individual shot admirably conveyed the emotion intended, its relation to the next was often loose and haphazard. The Russians—with Griffith as their instinctive prophet—explored the dynamic relation of shot to shot, quick to observe parallels of movement and composition, which ultimately led to their use of what I have called visual metaphor.

#### THE SOUND FILM

Looking back over her short life, the tenth Muse could, without immodesty, congratulate herself. Though respectably born in a laboratory, her early life had been spent in the squalid surroundings of flea circus and freak show. Her first advances to her sisters had been greeted with outraged ridicule. She a Muse! She, the unnatural offspring of an unholy liaison contracted between the magic-lantern and the novelette! But she had persevered: she had worked hard at improving herself, and now, at last, her sisters occasionally nodded to her or even smiled if still a little patronisingly. She was not quite one of the circle, but her existence was recognised.

The silent film had, in fact, by this time (1928–29) proved its right to be called a medium, because although it had produced little of permanent artistic value, it had proved its ability to tell stories and express the moods and emotions of its characters in a way peculiar to itself. But the film as a medium suffered from a unique handicap. In every other art the creative urge, the need to say something, forced the artist to enlarge his technique: the thing to be expressed was always in advance of the means of expression. We call works of art “primitive” when we mean that the artist has not been able to say all that he wants because he has not

been able to forge adequate tools for the purpose. Sometimes this conflict between the intensity of the thing to be said and the unyielding stubbornness of the medium gives a work a peculiar force and beauty as in certain primitive sculptures and archaic poetry. Films never passed through this stage: the director was never faced with a problem which the technicians could not solve in a twinkling—indeed, imaginatively the technicians were far in advance of the producers. No, the conflict was not with a recalcitrant medium, but with the sluggish and timid imagination both on the part of the producers and their audiences. There is, however, another thing to remember: a man who writes a book or paints a picture incurs only the expense of his writing material, his canvas and his paints: a man who makes a film must spend, literally, thousands. Therefore films, unless they are made by the State or quixotic millionaires, must be made by companies. Companies aim at profits for their shareholders, so they cannot be blamed for playing safe—underrating the taste and intelligence of their public. Economically this may be excusable: aesthetically it must be deplorable; and yet is not this the reason why the film is the only example of popular art—art where the unbridgeable chasm between art with a capital A and mere popular entertainment has not been irrevocably dug—where some artists cater for the intelligent few while a mass of artisans cater for the unintelligent, indiscriminating many? And this, surely, gives the film immense strength, because whatever it may lose in intellectual quality and even in subtleties which properly belong to it, its gains in vitality are out of all proportion. Its material is the stuff of the imagination of the people, and the director must take advantage of that fact and, if strong enough, master and mould that stuff into a work of art. No body of men catered more indefatigably to the taste of their public than the Elizabethan dramatists. The corpses, the blood, the ghosts, the torrential rhetoric, the tumbling cascade of words which their audiences drank in so thirstily—these they poured out with the utmost lavishness. They did not withdraw to a private garden barred by a gate marked “Art” where everything was in perfect taste and only one element was lacking—Life. No, they took all the things they knew their public wanted, and because some of them were men of genius they were able, at their best, to transform these cardboard monsters into Bosola or



Iago, these paragons of virtue into Annabella or Desdemona: these turgid outpourings of words into, "Thou art more lovely than the evening air: Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars," for ecstasy; or, "The element of water moistens the Earth: But blood flies upward and bedews the heavens," for horror.

Like the Elizabethan dramatist, every film director has, in effect, always the same audience, and, like the Elizabethan dramatist, he must realise that this limitation can be a source of strength. We have seen that no technical difficulties had hitherto hampered the producers; they had only to clap their hands and the technicians produced for them flying carpets or prehistoric monsters: the Red Sea divided itself for the Israelites—and Mr. Cecil B. DeMille—and swallowed up the chariots of the Egyptians. There was no visible wonder their magic could not conjure up; no *visible* wonder, yes, but in one thing they had failed: they had failed to give the Tenth Muse a voice. Forced to do without it she had, none the less, found a way of expressing herself in silent movement clearly and sometimes beautifully, and then the Great Day of Emancipation came. Sponsored by a composite fairy godmother in the corporeal shapes of the brothers Warner, the technicians endowed her with a voice, and, in one sickening slide, she found herself back at the bottom of Mount Parnassus. Freedom proved to be an illusion; from being the swiftest, most direct of the Muses, she found herself scarcely able to move. All she had gained was a slow, barely intelligible, sexless croak. But just as at the beginning of the silent film it had been enough, for a time, that the pictures moved, so now it was enough that the images spoke, and although Miss Garbo proved to have a voice, as one critic put it, "like a man with adenoids speaking into a leather bottle on a foggy night," none the less the words, "Garbo speaks," drew the town. (In fact, in my opinion, Miss Garbo has one of the most beautiful voices on the screen.) But the wonder wore off: once the worshippers ceased to be astonished that their silent Olympians could actually, or, in some cases, actually not, speak, as in silent films they began to want a little more. But they were not given naïve Wild West stories, or their equivalents, in terms of sound films; the intellectual content was, often, quite sophisticated. The whole process of film producing had, in fact, become laughably simple for the big Hollywood

producers. You sent off an expedition into the theatrical "Big Game" country and, after a time and probably having spent a good deal of dollar ammunition, the intrepid explorers returned with the hit of the New York season complete with cast, and, possibly, the author thrown in as a keepsake. The sets were then erected in the studio, the actors acted the play, the camera photographed it and the microphones recorded it; the whole thing could be done in ten days. Such writers as Maugham, O'Neill, Barry, Coward were all quickly captured and displayed in the new zoo, but whereas in the early Westerns the style, crude as it was, did spring from the matter and the medium, in these early talkies there was no discoverable indication of the sound film as a medium at all. They were merely stage plays, competently acted, moderately recorded and photographed, cut into convenient lengths and packed into tins. In such films the cinema ceased to be a means of expression and merely became a mode of transport. The more intelligent film directors, notably Hitchcock, René Clair, Mamoulian, Milestone, and some others, rebelled, and each in their different way gave interesting indications of the lines on which sound films could develop, but only Clair succeeded in really mastering the medium in a way that was immediately acceptable to the general public. Hitchcock's early sound films were, with every justification, much talked of and written about, but they were not tremendous box-office hits, while Mamoulian's deeply interesting first film, *Applause*, had to be taken off after three days. Clair's poetry-shot humour and easy unlaborious fantasy found a way to the public heart, and not even he, let alone his imitators, has equalled the enchanting, touching, wildly funny *Le Million*. But Clair, and many others, in their hatred for the living corpses of the theatre which haunted the screen, tended to an equally dangerous, though infinitely more attractive, fallacy—the fallacy that a sound film should be as much as possible like a silent film, with music, sound effects and the bare minimum of dialogue. In Art everything which succeeds in practice is legitimate, and as this is a fair description of Clair's masterpieces, it is perhaps foolish to condemn the theory which could produce such magic practice. None the less, when an element so new and so enormous is added to a medium, it is useless to pretend that it is just another technical device. Better face the fact that the sound

film is not just the silent film plus sound: it is a completely new medium.

At the beginning of this article, it was said that movement was the life-blood of the silent film. Movement is also the life-blood of the sound film, but, whereas in the silent film the movement or rhythm was simple, in the sound film it is duplex. In the silent film we analysed general movement into two particular kinds—the movement of people or objects within the limits of the shot, and the movement produced by the rhythmical relationship of one shot to another. The rhythm of the whole, however complicated in structure and detail, is simple, in that it appeals to one sense only—it is purely visual just as the rhythm of non-theatrical music is purely aural. It is true that the silent film was accompanied by suitable background music, but this was no more necessary to its intelligibility than it is necessary to see the conductor and the orchestra to make a symphony intelligible. The sound film is like ballet. In ballet the rhythm is neither that of the music nor that of the movements of the dancers, but is the relation of these two streams, one visual and the other aural, to each other; so, in the sound film, the movement of images must always be related to the movement of sound, be it music, dialogue, or incidental noises. If these two movements are not related (and I do not mean merely synchronised) or only related in a casual, haphazard way, the resulting film will not be a true sound film. Perhaps the simplest way to illustrate this is to take an obviously rhythmical subject like a scene from a ballet. It would be perfectly possible to set up the camera in, say, the front of the circle and photograph the scene through from beginning to end whilst, at the same time, recording the music. The result could, at best, be a record of the scene, useful possibly to historians, but of no aesthetic interest because it is, in fact, in no medium at all. If the scene is photographed from more than one angle, the first step has been taken, because it is the essence of the film to be able to change the relation of the audience to the action in a fraction of a second, whereas in the theatre the relation of any given part of the audience to the stage is constant throughout. But though you may arrange your visual fragments in the prettiest possible pattern, and though the dancers within the shots are moving in perfect synchronisation with the recorded music, you still will not

have realised the scene in terms of sound film, because only one of the two kinds of movement has been related to the music. The relation of shot to shot, though possibly perfectly satisfying in itself as purely visual rhythm, is not logically connected with the bar or phrase rhythm of the music. For the scene to be completely expressed, it is not enough for the dancers to move in time with the music, the shots themselves must dance, and they will if the visual "kick" caused by the cut from one camera angle to another is related to the aural "kick" of a strong beat, either by exact coincidence or calculated antithesis. Ballet was only chosen as an example because it is a clear case of aural and visual rhythms in combination. The underlying principle of the "kick" on the eye to the "kick" on the ear remains equally true for the most ordinary dialogue scenes. Speech, though it is not metrical, has just as defined a rhythm as music. For example: two men are quarrelling; they are on opposite sides of the table; one man says: "No, I tell you! No! No! No!" As he says the final "no!" he crashes his fist down on to the table. If, at this moment, we cut to a close-up of the man with the camera on table level so that the fist crashes right down into the lens of the camera, then visual "kick" and aural "kick" will coincide, each enhancing the other; and here, be it noticed, the cut is always more effective if it be made to the sound rather than the sense of the dialogue, where the peak of the one does not happen to coincide with the key-word of the other. Now, such cuts are all very well for moments of great emphasis, but would become tedious and jerky in long dialogue scenes. Where every dialogue point is underlined by a cut it would be open to Debussy's criticism of the Wagnerian *leit-motiv*. Wagner's characters, he said, never seemed able to speak to each other without, at the same time, exchanging visiting cards; but there is another way—the *legato cantabile* way. It is possible for the director, in a dialogue scene, so to arrange the action of his characters and movements of his camera that at any given moment during the scene the visual emphasis and the dramatic point, be it of dialogue or physical expression, would coincide without the jerk of an actual cut. There is all the difference in the world between this and the photographed play technique, although a long scene can be done in one shot: the difference lies in the fact that the relation between the play of images and the sequence of sound has been

truly imagined at every point. They are indissoluble marriage partners, not casual, indifferent fellow travellers. The greater weight of sound from the rhythmical point of view will always be at the visual emphasis, but an image takes infinitely less time to make itself intelligible than a sound. There are therefore a greater number of possible visual perspectives in a scene than aural ones, and for general purposes the three simple categories of long shot, medium shot and close-up suffice for sound, but, just as in silent films we saw that we could identify the eye of the audience with that of one of the characters in the film, so in sound films we can identify the ear, and not only the physical ear but the emotional ear, with the ear of the audience. Alfred Hitchcock did it in his first sound film, *Blackmail*. A girl has killed a man by stabbing him with a knife. No one knows she has done it, and next morning she is laying the table for breakfast in the back parlour of her mother's tobacconist's shop. At this moment a neighbour comes in and begins chattering to the girl's mother about "this awful murder." "Of course, dear, I can understand seeing red, hitting a man over the head with a brick, but a knife, well—I don't think a knife's nice. Do you, dear? I mean—a knife—well, it's not British, if you know what I mean, etc." All this time the camera has been concentrated on the girl's face as she listens. The woman's voice begins to go out of focus and becomes a blurred stream of sound. Only the word "knife" cuts through it with a maddening reiteration. The girl reaches for the bread-knife to put it on the table and, suddenly, she finds she can't touch it. In this scene we have been listening through the ears of the terrified girl, just as in *Doctor Caligari* we looked through the eyes of a madman.

To translate the thoughts of the characters into terms of sound is only one farther step. The present writer was shooting a script in which there was a scene where a mother sees her son off to the front; the audience were never shown the actual scene; the parting was conveyed in the following way: the mother returns to her house from the station and starts on her domestic duties, the commonplace routine of going through her household books. A friend is announced, and while the mother is saying, "I can't possibly see her," she comes gushing into the room and sits firmly down on the sofa. After a few perfunctory words of sympathy, "I always

say that it's hardest for those who are left behind, etc., etc.," she begins a long saga about what Mrs. X said to Lady Y at the last committee meeting. During this the camera has been creeping up to the mother's face, excluding the friend, and as the friend's face disappears from the screen so her voice fades out, and instead we hear the sound of marching feet followed by all the characteristic noises of a railway station. Suddenly the friend's face comes into the picture and her voice cuts sharply in, "Don't you agree, dear?" The mother gives a slight start, pulls herself together, and says: "Oh, yes—yes, entirely." The woman continues her tinkling flow of small talk and again her voice fades away, and again the thoughts of the mother go back to the station. We hear the slamming doors, the guard's whistle, and the train going away into the distance. Again the woman's beak pokes itself into the picture: "What would you have done in my place, dear?" The mother makes another effort: "I—I—" But it is too much for her and she faints. Throughout this scene the audience has not only been hearing with the mother's ears, but thinking with her thoughts. At the moment of fainting they, also, see with her eyes. A series of shots, each lasting a fraction of a second, of what she sees as she falls flash across the screen—the chandelier, a china dog on the mantelpiece, part of the woman's hat—and with these images were combined the attempt to translate into sound the nauseous buzzing in the ears of a fainting person—a long-held note on the lowest open string of the 'cello with the sharp crescendo and decrescendo, a long-held note on the piccolo, and, at the moment of the fall, a single high pizzicato note on the violin, and simultaneously a major seventh on the piano in the top octave. This is not "background" music nor realistic sound, but is a kind of sound metaphor, and sound metaphor can be used just as effectively as visual metaphor, and it can be combined with it. For example: it would be possible to take a shot of a *prima donna* singing "Caro nome" and cut in with it shots of a goldfish opening and shutting its mouth. It would then be possible to distort the soprano's voice into the clucking of a hen while preserving the shape of the melody. We should then have the image of a goldfish singing with the voice of a hen, which might be an admirable summing up of that particular *prima donna*. Finally, just as in the silent film at moments of great intensity we saw it was possible

to use visual metaphor for dissolving the particular dramatic emotion into something lyrical and universal, so in the sound film music can be used—not as background music, the pleasant emotional wash which helps the general mood—but as a substitute for speech, where the mood and emotion to be expressed need nothing less intense or less precise. Mendelssohn pointed out in a letter that the emotional content of a piece of music cannot be translated into words, not because music is vaguer and more indefinite, but because it is so exact that it cannot be defined by anything so ambiguous as language. Music in such cases becomes a metaphor of speech.

These seem to me the main lines along which the Tenth Muse has travelled in her search for self-expression. If she rarely achieves it that is the fault of her priests and acolytes. She herself can, with justice, I believe, claim at any rate a foothold on Mount Parnassus.

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## GEOGRAPHY

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### SOUTH AFRICA

by HAROLD JENKINS

Dear John,

**I**F YOU do decide to come to South Africa, it is to be hoped you will come by sea. To prefer a ship to an aeroplane, the old to the new, will be at once to violate all the prejudices of the country; but that can't be helped. For years after the war air-travel is likely to be expensive enough for an arrival by sea to be comprehensible if undistinguished. And in exchange for your loss of prestige you will have the æsthetic satisfaction of beginning with Cape Town seen from Table Bay (if you are lucky, just before dawn) instead of being dropped down on the bare and featureless highveld on the outskirts of Johannesburg or Pretoria. Johannesburg will be your ultimate destination, but coming from the old world, you will not confuse the ultimate end with the immediate, or speed with comfort. So you will forbear to short-circuit the grand approach which Nature carefully prepared for you.

Cape Town (you will hesitate, I suppose, about whether this is one word or two. Only habit will resolve your confusion: the practice of the inhabitants will not)—Cape Town will be marked out for you in an arc of lights around the bay, and behind them more lights in clots and clusters and irregular spokes reaching high up into the darkness. (You will understand what this meant to many thousands of British troops arriving fresh from years of an English blackout.) But these upward-reaching spokes will not

*From HORIZON, Cyril Connolly, Editor*  
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prepare you for the height of Table Mountain, which will reduce them to a tawdry little frill around its base when in the dawn it astonishingly looms a vast solid mass of grey rock, flat-topped like a table standing three thousand feet above the sea. More likely than not a table-cloth of cloud rests lightly on its surface as you watch from the sea and the sun slowly rises on your left. 'On your left'—you think nothing of that at the time, but later your subconscious presents you with it as a conundrum of geography: poised at the southern tip of Africa, Cape Town actually faces north. And that is Cape Town's spiritual geography too. It stretches an arm backwards round the mountain with exploratory fingers creeping south towards Cape Point, but its body is sheltered by the mountain, and its gaze is fixed timidly, eagerly, over your shoulder towards the European lands from which you come. It looks to the north, basking, and in the summer stifling.

Soon you will want to go up Table Mountain. If your pride and strength are what they were, you will go sweatily in shorts, otherwise by the cable-railway to the little white salt-cellar you saw at the right-hand edge of the table which now transforms itself into the upper cable-station. Back at sea-level, with that over and your mind accordingly at rest, you will loiter easily a week or two, drinking tea in the mornings on a balcony on the shady side of Adderley Street, strolling under the oaks in the Gardens beyond it, occasionally taking the electric train out to False Bay, the inlet of the Indian Ocean which comes behind the mountain, where you will bathe in a sun-warmed sea. At Fish Hoek the water may easily be seventy degrees. If petrol rationing is over, a friend is sure to drive you round the peninsula, and your admiration of the sea and mountain scenery will be both expected and sincere. In suburban gardens you will see red hibiscus, blue agapanthus, giant flaming cannas, perhaps purple bougainvillea massed against white wall. In rare moments of energy you will walk among the pine-trees on the mountain slopes. You will explore a little the country round, its vineyards, its old Dutch farmhouses with their graceful curling gables. Cape Town itself has few dignified buildings, but you will find it one of the few places left on earth where you can achieve the dignity of leisure. And that is another reason why you should take Cape Town first. For dignity you will hardly see again.

When you have discovered that Cape Town is not South Africa, you will quickly book a first-class seat on the next available train for Johannesburg. You will grumble at the fare, but you will not go second, and only natives travel third. You may ruminate on this odd social and economic feature of South African life. The ordinary man, assuming him to be white—and the franchise, at any rate, shows small cognizance of other colours—will usually choose the more rather than the less expensive. Booking at the theatre in England, you may sometimes have been disappointed at ‘Nothing less than eight-and-six, sir.’ In South Africa that would be impossible: the dearest seats sell first. That explains why South Africans who travel overseas think London a mighty expensive place to live in. They stay at high-priced West End hotels; they shop at the dearest shops, and think they would lose prestige if they did not. They overtip—if they tip at all. There is no established aristocracy, the ordinary man is as good as his neighbour, and only the best will do for him. All of which is very democratic—so long as you remember that the ordinary man is white. Naturally the black and the coloured, though more numerous, are not ordinary. They are something less. On the train, they *may* travel first-class—though not in the same compartment as you—if they can pay the fare. Usually the compartment reserved for such an eventuality travels empty.

Possibly you will be surprised at the slowness of your train. Travelling by car is much faster, in spite of poor roads in the large tracts of country away from the big towns. When you have got used to the country, and petrol is once more plentiful, your high-powered American car will cruise for hours at fifty or sixty, speeds to which South African trains do not aspire. It is all but a thousand miles from Cape Town to Johannesburg and your train will take about thirty-five hours. This will give you plenty of time to get used to the landscape. When you have passed through the coastal range of mountains, always glistening, in winter with snow, in summer with heat, and have slowly puffed and zig-zagged on to the interior plateau, you will be in the vast semi-desert called the Karroo, where the dusty earth shows nothing but small brown shrivelled-looking bushes and range after range of low hills. Occasionally for variety a solitary hill crops up as flat

as if its top had been sliced off with a knife, occasionally—very occasionally—a lone white farmhouse with its line of cypresses to break the wind, and sometimes not far from the railway track a group of dirty-looking, unkempt sheep. Once in several hours you stop at a little station with its adjacent row of corrugated-iron cottages in a thin shade of pepper-trees, and are besieged by half-naked black urchins with hands held out in prayer for pennies or scraps of food. At length the Karroo gives way to the veld (you will soon learn to spell it without the *t*), shrivelled bush to parched yellow grass. The hills disappear, but the wide open spaces go on. Those you will have learnt to expect, but perhaps you did not expect the wide open spaces to be as empty as they are, when every tree is an event, so that you positively welcome Johannesburg when at last it appears, heralded by white and glistening mine-dumps and squalid dusty slums. As the sun catches its tall white buildings, you will be half-incredulous. After a thousand miles of next-to-nothingness, the first astonishing thing about Johannesburg is that it should be there at all; the second that, being there, it should pack all its shops and offices, its commerce and its industry, into a square half-mile, or little more, of narrow, crowded streets. One of the principal daily problems for every Johannesburg business-man and shopper is where, oh where, to park his (her) car. Garages are few, and anyway the streets are public, aren't they? In the congestion and the bustle, you will speedily forget Cape Town, which if you ever revisit it, will seem to you now like a return to Europe. Not like England, of course. Like the Mediterranean? Perhaps (you decide with a shrug). But anyway, quite different from this foreign, polyglot city, which is coming, for good or ill, to represent South Africa. Under the arcadings of Johannesburg's big stores, browbeaten by its tall blocks of flats, bewildered by its straight streets, all cutting at right angles and all exactly alike, so that your only hope of finding your way about is to learn off the names of the streets and the order in which they come—here you will forget not only Cape Town, but the veld itself, the original South Africa, which Johannesburg's street planning is quite determined that you shall not see. Some of my friends deplore this, many more are only too glad to be sheltered from the aspect of those empty, rolling, monotonous, grand and friendless plains. Fresh from England's

neat and cultivated countryside, even from its crowded towns and collisions on the pavement in the blackout, you may easily feel that way too. So as you look the length of Pritchard Street, you may spare a friendly nod for the mine dump at the end, crowned nightly by a brilliant sunset, which for ever blocks your view. But occasionally, as you rush from office to cinema and cinema to dance-hall, you may momentarily regret that this big city in the middle of a vast and empty land finds space anywhere near its centre for only one tiny park, a trifle bigger, perhaps, than Russell Square. Out to the north, where the wealthy live (and they are many), Johannesburg is spacious. But there equally the veld is denied. You will admire the elegance of roads lined with jacarandas, large houses set among trees in well-laid-out gardens. Green grass is coaxed and inexorably watered; dahlias or cannas, salvia or zinnias abound; and often, perched on solid rock, on a site to stagger your economic mind and its inevitable thought of building costs, a house looks down on terrace after terrace with rockeries full of aloes, cactuses and carefully nurtured succulents. When you find that even a house with five rooms (all on the ground floor, of course) and a jakes in the garden in one of the mothier suburbs can be sold for two or three thousand pounds, you will come back towards the centre of the city and decide to look for a flat. At present you will not find one, but it is no good moving on to somewhere else. Any other town will be equally full. Perhaps one day I will go away and lend you mine. Then from high up above Pritchard Street, wandering out on to the balcony (which you will soon be calling 'stoep'), you will gaze among square blocks of concrete rising anything up to fourteen stories to the minehead which conveniently fills a gap. Glancing down, if you look so far below, you will be surprised to see, in this city of the new, a little corrugated-iron shack, dilapidated and rusty, with its solitary pepper-tree, left behind from when all this was veld. Its aged owner still sits shirt-sleeved in the sun on its paintless stoep, thinking, one supposes, of when Johannesburg was a mining camp. Ugly as it is, it seems a pity that even the shack is for sale. When the war is over you might buy it and build your own block of flats and wave to me across the street—though this would hardly make up for your having stolen my one little bit of view. It would be an excellent investment—and investments are

what count in Johannesburg, where the key moment of the day comes in the lunch-hour, when you listen to the broadcast of the prices ruling on the stock exchange at one o'clock.

You will not find it cheap, living in Johannesburg. I am told it and Pretoria are more expensive than New York, though my own experience doesn't enable me to make the comparison. Clothes can be got without coupons but at half as much again as in London. Food used to be cheap but isn't any longer. Fruit by your standards will be plentiful. This is an excellent year for mangoes, but a shilling will buy you only three or four, or perhaps five peaches, if they are small. The price of grapes is now controlled at a maximum of sevenpence a pound, after being a shilling or over half the season to customers who have been brought up to think them very dear at fourpence. You will rejoice to find meat, tea and butter unrationed, but your smile will fade if you (or your native boy) come back from the shop without any. Rents, luckily, are controlled at pre-war levels, but even so, if you manage to find a flat, and can afford to buy furniture to put in it, you will pay twelve to fifteen pounds for two rooms (wherefore most single people and many couples live in a flat with only one). With your flat, however, you will have an electric stove and a refrigerator, constant running hot water, and the services of a native 'boy' in a periodically white house-suit to clean for you every morning. For a tip of ten or twelve shillings a month he will also wash your dishes and possibly clean your shoes. And you will be glad to let him do that, for of course those are black men's jobs. No white South African, man or woman, could contemplate washing dishes and survive.

The 'boy' you will find considered one of the advantages of living in Johannesburg or Durban rather than in Cape Town. In Cape Town you would have a 'girl,' but she would be difficult to get, need careful handling, since she would know you couldn't do without her, and would vanish in the evening to look after her own house and family. Your 'boy' will live on the roof or in the basement. He has a family, too, but they are far away, in the northern Transvaal or Zululand. He sends them money regularly out of his monthly five pounds, visits them every two or three years, when the roof of their hut wants thatching or he has scraped up enough savings to buy a little leisure, and then returns

to start all over again and to hear a few months later that his wife has another child.

Your 'girl' at the Cape would not be a native (Bantu), but a 'coloured' girl; that is, a member of that half-breed race, mixture of Bantu and Hottentot, Malay and European, which seems to have been brought into the world to do all the domestic and manual labour of the Cape. You will see few of them in the Transvaal, many fewer indeed than Indians, whom you will often observe in their little greengrocers' shops, or sometimes in the street—women in gay-coloured saris or a boy, perhaps, wearing a fez. To see *many* Indians you would have to go to Durban; the Transvaal rejoices to leave the Indian 'problem' to Natal. In Johannesburg most of the faces which are not white will be beneath the black woolly hair of the Bantu. The Bantu you will see nearly everywhere you go. Enormous washerwomen stride past with bundles on their heads and babies on their backs. Workmen sit in the gutter in the lunch-hour playing games with draughts or bits of stone. Errand-boys in khaki uniforms, barefoot domestics in blouse and shorts, and crowds of other black people, not a few in filthy rags—they will brush against you on the pavement—and occasionally one will get cuffed by some young white ruffian, though you yourself may mind the jostle of a black man less than the lighted cigarette-end which falls from an upper window as you pass. They will not be in the cinemas ('Europeans only,' your ticket may say, in case there should be any doubt, though there is none), nor, except as servants, in restaurants or the houses of your friends. Nor will they ride beside you on the bus or tram (if you are so plebeian as to use those modes of transport), as your coloured servant might in Cape Town—whence many Cape Town people prefer the suburban railway, which at least has separate classes. In Johannesburg natives have special trams, aluminium-coloured instead of red; or by favour of the conductor they may ride on your tram upstairs at the back.

You will be astonished to discover that most of these black people do not live in Johannesburg. Unless they live on their employer's premises—in a hutch in the back garden (never inside the house)—they must live outside the city, in native townships or 'locations' like Orlando. If you go to Orlando, you can see some thousands of little detached brick houses set out in straight

rows, each with its two little rooms for its family of native occupants, its little rectangle of garden in front, but *no* kitchen, bathroom, pantry, cupboards, ceiling, floor, light, water (except in the street, one tap to five houses). But Orlando is the most lordly of the native townships and will seem like Paradise when you have seen, as somewhere or other you easily may, natives living in a shed put together from bits of tin, with a sheet of corrugated iron for a roof held on by a boulder at each corner.

Of the native children in the Transvaal (and the other provinces may be taken to be much the same) seventy per cent do not go to school. Most of those who do leave when they have learnt as much as the average European child of nine or ten. A few adult natives are rescued from illiteracy in the handful of night-schools, which are run two or three nights a week by tired and devoted white school teachers, university students, and even enthusiastic fourth-form boys. The actual achievement of these altruistic people is small, but no more pathetic than any other small attempt to remedy a great evil. Higher education is not entirely barred. Orlando has its native high school, and in the lecture-rooms of the University of the Witwatersrand you may see an occasional native mingling with the other students on equal terms. Natives may also take the degree examinations of the University of South Africa, though they will sit in separate rooms. (One recent examination put its candidates in three rooms—Europeans, non-Europeans, and Chinese.)

If you bring your son with you, he of course will go to high school; and you can set against your big household bills the fact that he will go there free of charge. There he will meet lots of others like himself with only a slightly different accent and a little more tan to their skins. But he will meet no little Afrikaners, for the grandsons of the Boers against whom your father fought attend a different school, where the lessons take place in Afrikaans. Your son will learn Afrikaans, and will probably find it quite as irksome as you in your schooldays found French. Yet if he stays and present government plans mature, in five years' time he will not only be taught Afrikaans but have to use it as the language medium for half his other lessons. You will probably hear much talk about this plan for bilingual schools, which has been for several years the dream of a few enthusiasts with ideals of

racial co-operation. Perhaps you will be surprised to find that the immediate result of the Government's sponsorship of the scheme has been rather to exacerbate than mitigate racial animosities. Among independent and proud-spirited people compulsion does have that effect. Many Afrikaners are afraid for the future of their own language if their children are made to talk English as well as Afrikaans; and you yourself may feel a similar distrust, a fear that your son's education may in the end be sacrificed.

You will see Afrikaans along with English on many of the street signs and on every official notice. But in Johannesburg you will hardly ever hear it in the shops or about the streets. On the tram? Perhaps, on the rare occasions when you take the tram to Newlands or Melville, suburbs of the Afrikaans working or lower middle class. Or the conductor may speak it to the driver, though he will address you in English, if he speaks to you at all. So you will probably not learn Afrikaans. Yet you would be wise to do so if you intend travelling much in country areas (the 'platteland,' or, with some disparagement, 'backveld'). Not that you will not be understood if you persist in speaking English, but you will probably be disliked. This will puzzle you at first; for you will know that the present pro-British government is made up largely of Afrikaners, and you will have come across many Afrikaners who are proud to have fought on Britain's side in the war and glad to call an Englishman their friend. But by degrees, as you go about the country and hear whispers, of what is said in the Afrikaans papers, which you will not read, you will know what it means to feel unwanted—hated even, not for yourself as an individual but as a member of the nation to which you happen to belong. With sorrow you will come to a keener understanding of the sort of racial problem which has in the past made things difficult in eastern and central Europe—the Sudetenland, for example—and is certain to do so again. Perhaps that is one reason why, as a student of social and political problems, you should come.

You will not, then, I expect, be very comfortable in your mind in South Africa, but physically you can be comfortable enough in Johannesburg, so long as you have money. And the climate is superb. There are half-a-dozen or so days in the year when the sun does not shine. For weeks on end the thermometer goes above



eighty every day without touching ninety as much as once a year. In contrast to Cape Town, where it rains in winter, the highveld goes in for violent summer thunderstorms accompanied by brilliant spectacles of lightning. The winter is dry and sunny, with a hard bright light, and though it may freeze now and then, you will rarely think of putting on an overcoat before evening. A youth about to pay his first visit overseas confided to me: 'Shall I have to wear a vest? I've never worn one yet.' But don't think you will never be cold in Johannesburg. You will suffer much indoors—from the superstitions of acquaintances who believe that a fire in a house is unhealthy, a fire in the day time positively degenerate, and suffocation the inevitable nemesis upon the closing of a window. You will be polite as always; but budding friendships have been nipped by little more than this.

As for the friendships you will make, I think you had better be left to make them for yourself. Forgive me if I seem to have dwelt too long on the people you will move among but will not 'meet.' You will understand why when you get here. For to anyone who doesn't take it for granted, the colour-bar is easily the most conspicuous feature of South African life. I have not bothered you with details about malnutrition or the restrictive native pass laws. If you come, you will soon find out about those, or you can read about them in, say, *The Black Man's Burden*, by John Burger. Nor have I even completed the tale of the racial medley. But then, in comparison to the colour-bar, it matters very little that you should know, for example, that of the white population of Johannesburg roughly a tenth are Jews. They are not liked, of course, though they get on better than in most places. They are prominent among doctors and lawyers, in some retail trades, in the theatre, in all left-wing groups, and on every single committee which engages in social work or helps the natives. Such committees are not few: don't imagine that Johannesburg is conscienceless or that you will not find a very enlightened intelligentsia with whom to discuss all that is up-to-date in literature, music, politics or social affairs. You will. They may not know about *Horizon*, but they will all read their *New Statesman*. So you may expect numbers of liberal and internationally minded people to set against those intellectuals from the Afrikaans universities who use 'liberal' as a term of reproach.

I may as well confess that Afrikaans literature, which you naturally want to know about, puts me in a difficulty. One can't ignore it and I am not competent to say very much about it, though it is clear that a young and robust people, intensely self-conscious about its culture, provides a ready market for anything readable in its own language. Adventure stories, detective stories and thrillers with South African settings are conscientiously turned out for the masses who would otherwise have no popular fiction. The number of Afrikaans novels published annually has doubled in the last five years; but in order not to give a false impression, one should add that the number is now about eighty and that in 1941 (a peak year, before the paper shortage had serious effect) the number of *books* (not of novels) published in South Africa in all languages was 435. The more serious Afrikaans novels deal with such subjects as the social and family complications that ensue when an Afrikaner falls in love outside his own race, the financial collapse of a farmer who finally has to sell out to a Jewish storekeeper, the tragedy of a family who discover that they have native blood. For something more cosmopolitan in outlook (those who seem to know talk about Dutch influences) and more modernistic in technique (without knowing Afrikaans you can gauge a little from watching the irregular lines of some of the poems in the Afrikaans journals) you should turn rather to the poets, notably the brothers Louw, or of course Uys Krige, South Africa's most interesting poet at the moment, who writes both in Afrikaans and English. His experiences in Spain, the Western Desert and the prison-camp put him in touch with a wide modern audience, and you will find little that seems strange, though much that is novel, in his imagery and his experimental metres. Yet his rhythms have a tempo and sometimes an elaboration not common in modern English verse. You will have come across examples of his work before now in *Horizon*; but you will not get the most out of his poems until you have heard him read them.

Most South African writers in English tend to have a sense of frustration. Their home market is very small: don't forget that Manchester and Liverpool between them could just about house the South African public for English books. The Afrikaans public is no bigger; but unlike the Afrikaners, English writers must com-

pete with all the latest books from England and America. A South African imprint does not help—rather the reverse, for if the book was any good, one thinks, an overseas publisher would have accepted it. It is taken for granted that the author would prefer that; and since all writers like a wide public and big sales, of course he would. His eyes are turned to London, or at least to Europe, and if he can he goes there. Writers like Roy Campbell and William Plomer, whose work you will know as well as I, are hardly South African any more.

It is the same with actors, and even more with actresses, who not unnaturally regard their local stage as the platform from which trains leave for the West End, if one can only manage to get on them. The war, however, sent a few trains in the reverse direction. The arrival of Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies and the return, for a space, of Leontine Sagan began a boom in the South African theatre; and South Africans like Marda Vanne and Nan Munro are at present acting and producing before their own compatriots. The standard of amateur acting strikes me as extremely high in Johannesburg, where you will fare better for the theatre than in all but one or two of the provincial English cities. Unfortunately the interest in acting is much greater than in drama. I have known an actor spend longer rehearsing a spotlight effect than the delivery of his lines. And audiences applaud the acting and the sets rather than the play. One society advertised a discussion—I assume in all seriousness—on whether the author, the actor, or the producer contributes most to the play. The Johannesburg Repertory Players, with a subscribing membership running into four figures and a waiting list of applicants, is sure of its audience whatever it cares to give them, and therefore has immense opportunities—not to say responsibilities—in the matter of elevating public taste. It has been known to do O'Neill and Pirandello with some success, and it promised well for 1944 by starting off with *The Doctor's Dilemma* and *The Rivals*; but noticed nothing incongruous—and what is worse, was about as well received—when later in the year it descended to the puerilities of *Life with Father* and *Cottage to Let*. (Puer—boy, age perhaps eleven.) The Press does not help. Standards of criticism are at a low ebb, as they say, except that an ebb presumes a flow; and the only possible sign of that is, I should say, in *Trek*, a pro-

gressive Cape Town fortnightly, which is achieving a circulation.

The attraction of bad plays is in most cases that they have been successful in London or New York. This attraction is a real one and not altogether to be despised. South Africa goes to the best shops, but may not have the discernment to get served with the best goods. So anything you can do to improve the taste of London may have its reflex here. For English culture in South Africa is a provincial culture, looking to its metropolis overseas. And this is inevitable. The alternative would be for South Africa to cut itself adrift not only from the other English-speaking countries—the bond, however, is too strong—but from the rest of the modern world. Yet one of the saddest sights in South Africa is the label ‘Imported’ flaunted in a shop window. That is not, like ‘Made in Germany,’ a government-decreed stigma protecting local industry. It is an unashamed advertisement.

### IT WAS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

by R. J. CRUIKSHANK

ON THE TABLE rest the first files of the *Daily News*, January to December, 1846—brought up from the vaults—peaceful Victorian survivors from our mad times of H.E.s, fly bombs, rockets.

Looking at the panorama of that year, its splendours and its despairs, one is tempted to apply to it the famous opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way. . . ."

Yet to the Time traveller from 1946 it is the gusto of that year which makes the strongest impression. The achievements of the men and women of that year were remarkable, their energies were unwearying. They had a great faith in their own powers and a great faith in the future of their country. It is a good tonic to spend some time in their cheerful company. Many evil and cruel things were done in those days, but there were strong voices to put a name to evil and cruelty; the general tone of the age was one of buoyant optimism. We were on our way to the sunny uplands!

It was, of course, a notable year in our political history. In January, Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, declared for the

*From ROARING CENTURY, by R. J. Cruikshank*

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Repeal of the Corn Laws, shattering the Conservative Party in the process, altering the balance of power in English society, and bringing in that length of years during which Free Trade became as much a religion as an economic system. That summer was an arch through which gleamed an untravelled world of riches, and pride, and might. In the June of that year Peel's Government fell, and Russell's Cabinet sat in its place, coming in with all the radiant hope of Victorian Liberalism.<sup>1</sup>

"This is a year of wonders," said the men of the cities.

"Peel has betrayed his party and ruined his country," said the country squires. "God save us from what will happen next. What's to become of the farm lands?"

There was gloom in the manors, that June; joy in Manchester. Power was passing from the country house to the counting house, from Sir Leicester Dedlock to Mr. Rouncewall, the manufacturer. The long reign of the mercantile middle classes had begun.

(Just one year short of the century, in June, 1945, another great Conservative leader, Mr. Churchill, met defeat in his hour of triumph, and a Labour Government came in.)

The roaring 'forties were also the hungry 'forties, the 'forties of the potato blight and the mildewed corn. The country was on the eve of such an expansion of trade as it had never known, but phantoms were in the streets. The failure of the potato crop brought misery to millions; many starved to death in Ireland; in the end it decided the issue of Repeal. Famine shadowed men's minds in 1846 as it shadows them in 1946.

"Rotten potatoes have done it all; they put Peel in his damned fright," growled the Duke of Wellington. In our relations with the Irish we have been a long time paying the price of those rotten potatoes. On the day Repeal was carried in the House of Lords, Peel was overthrown in the Commons on a Bill to deal with crimes in Ireland. "For upwards of a hundred years," wrote the *Daily News*, "ministers and legislators have had to repress outrage in Ireland by coercive laws levelled indiscriminately against all classes." The effort was a vain one, sighed the newspaper. But for another seventy-five years successive Governments

<sup>1</sup> Among the distinguished men born in this year was that incomparable defender of Liberal ideals, C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*. F. H. Bradley, whose *Appearance and Reality* was the noblest product of English philosophy in the nineteenth century, was born in 1846.

were to pursue the policy of alternate repression and conciliation. Ireland was the sphinx of the century, continually propounding her riddle to English politicians, and destroying them when they gave the wrong answer.

The great migration began in that summer of 1846. The precise figure of Ireland's population in that year is not known, but it is commonly put at around 8,500,000. Within ten years, at least 2,000,000 had fled to America to escape starvation. Many did not survive the journey. To quote Mr. J. L. Garvin's brilliant shorthand note of history—America gave Ireland the potato on which a large population was reared; from America came the blight which destroyed the potato; and it was America which provided a sanctuary for the victims.

It was the year when Income Tax was 7d in the pound instead of nine shillings. It was the year when Britain and the United States came near to war over the Oregon boundary line.

To the men of that age, as to later generations, 1846 was a memorable year for other reasons than its politics. It was the year, for example, of "the great Railroad Mania." Quite suddenly, the British public became fully aware of what might be made of this new method of moving about the globe—and of the fortunes that would spring from it. The little, sporadic, unconnected lines began to be linked up into systems, unifying the country and making internal communication and trade infinitely easier. On the maps of the time the spider is seen to be working with a furious diligence, crisscrossing the country with his threads, until the web comes to look very much as it appears today in Bradshaw or the A.B.C. Railroad Guides. These great-grandfathers of ours had the same feeling about the railways that their great-grandsons have about air transport. "It is becoming a small world," they said. "It is becoming one world." Good-bye to the romanticism of coaches and the coaching inns! Farewell, Mr. Pickwick!

Fast transport—easy communications—free trade and the new machines to accelerate that free exchange of goods—all this was opening up the globe and bringing its peoples closer, ever closer. The vision of a world in which all men would be prosperous and happy, with war become as absurd an anachronism as the clash of knights in armour, shone before the eyes of an optimistic

generation. On the waters, the change from sailing ships to steamships, from wood to iron was going on rapidly. A sense of good times coming was in the air. Trade was marching well ahead of the flag. The Repealers foretold that prosperity would soon come roaring in like a Cornish tide. The British were plainly the favourite sons of Destiny.

Eighteen forty-six was the year when the Electric Telegraph Company was formed in London to exploit commercially the invention of the "magnetic telegraph"; the Post Office did not take the system over until 1870. The first public telegram had been handled by the Great Western Railway in 1838, but the invention was still young enough not to have lost its savour of witchcraft. Soon, wherever the iron road was laid, the bare telegraph trees would follow, and a new sound would be brought into the countryside, the sleepy drone of the wires. That summer the *Daily News* recorded how, through the agency of the magnetic telegraph, a thief running across the platform at Cambridge and leaping on a train had been picked up by the police on reaching London. The newspaper noted the striking detail that the warning message from Cambridge had taken less than half a minute to speed to London. Here was Ariel in the service of the Law, wearing a Bobby's tall beaver hat. Inspector Bucket had found a new ally in the detection of crime. Nearly seventy years later an even more astonishing device of the scientists, wireless, was employed by Bucket's successor, Inspector Dew, to capture the murderer Crippen at Quebec.<sup>2</sup>

In this January of 1846, Michael Faraday, who is one of the germinal minds of the century, was lecturing to the Royal Institution on his experiments with electricity. The professor, said the newspapers, gave "the first experimental demonstration of his recent important discoveries in Magnetism and Light." With the sparkles and flashes at the tips of his fingers, Faraday appeared a benevolent sorcerer. The electric age would soon be upon Britain. All the curious and searching brains of '46 were being stirred by the boundless hopes of science. Many of the inventions which have changed man's daily habits have sprung from Faraday's researches or his intuitions: telegraphy, ocean cables, wireless,

<sup>2</sup> The first telegraph message used in tracking a murderer described him as "a man in the garb of a kwaker," there being no Q in the code. That was in 1839.



electric power and light, the telephone, among them. There was a buoyant faith abroad in 1846 that invention and human happiness were inseparable, that science was the all-bountiful mother, that physical progress must inevitably increase the sum of virtue. No shadow of atomic bombs crossed the sunshine of those cheerful Victorians.

This was the year when ether was first used in operations, and, for the rest of the century, human kind was spared an infinity of suffering and pain. Workingmen of London, aware through their daily lives that there were other abuses besides the Corn Laws crying for redress, formed an association to draw attention to the sorry state of housing and health in the slums. The Chartists were in a constant eruption this year, calling great crowds together on moor and common, rolling up petitions and crying a plague on Whig and Tory. Men of property were in high alarm at the spread of Chartism. A German merchant's son, Friedrich Engels, had lately been in Lancashire, dissecting the dumb miseries of the victims of the Industrial Revolution. Engels' *The Working Classes In England*, published in 1844, had wakened but small notice. Podsnap was our tutelary deity in those days, and of foreigners he said, "They do, sir—they do—I am sorry to be obliged to say it—as they do."

But there were writers at home to prod the fat ribs of complacency. Disraeli's *Sybil, or the Two Nations*, brought out in 1845, had displayed the rhetorician of the Young Tories, the man who shot Peel full of arrows, as a pioneer in the novel of social significance. "I was told that an impassable gulf divided the Rich from the Poor; I was told that the Privileged and the People formed Two Nations, governed by different laws, influenced by different manners, with no thoughts or sympathies in common; with an innate inability of mutual comprehension."

Thomas Carlyle, the Scot "with a rat gnawing inside him," is represented in the *Daily News* of 1846 by a long review of his *Oliver Cromwell*, one of his obeisances to the great man theory of history, a theory which has added considerably to the woes of the world since then. But it was Carlyle's virtue that he cried out, like Elijah born again, against the sins of self-satisfaction, the corruptions of contentment; prophesying, not without sombre relish, the fire that must fall upon the city of man's pride. "Eng-

land is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition. With unabated bounty, the land of England blooms and grows; waving with yellow harvests; thick-studded with workshops, industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers understood to be the strongest, the cunningest and the willingest Earth ever had. . . . Of these successful, skillful workers some two millions, it is now counted, sit in workhouses, Poor-Law prisons or have outdoor relief flung over the wall to them." Where is our wealth? We are all enchanted, Carlyle cries. A terrible spell lies upon us.

Eighteen forty-six was the year when her Majesty graciously gave assent to the first Public Baths and Washhouses Bill. It would soon be possible for the begrimed navvy to cleanse his body for twopence. Elegant and refined persons were even willing to concede the existence of drains in that blazing hot summer of 1846. One of the most useful contributions made to human progress this year was Mr. Doulton's invention of a new drainpipe.

In 1846 an Act was passed turning disreputable Battersea Fields into a Royal Park. Out of that Act sprang one of London's loveliest parks—and the movement to furnish playing fields for the million—the reaching out towards sport and the open air—which has been one of the great social betterments of the century.

This was a year of note in literature. In the *Daily News* for 30 December appears the announcement that the first part of *Vanity Fair*—*Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society* will be published next day, price one shilling. The author's name is given as W. M. Thackeray (Titmarsh). Michael Angelo Titmarsh—what a pen-name for a master! In the spring of this year there crept out a small volume of poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, of which scant notice was taken beyond an indifferent review in the *Athenaeum* for 4 July 1846.

Its fate is a monument to critical blindness, for the contributions made by Ellis Bell included poems that are likely to endure so long as the English-speaking world has a care for poetry. Ellis Bell happened to be Emily Brontë. The masculine cape of Currer Bell enfolded Charlotte and behind Acton Bell hid Anne. The *Daily News* was the only paper in which Charlotte would advertise the poems. Frozen by the neglect of their verse in this spring of 1846, the sisters turned to the novel: Charlotte produced *The*

*Professor*, which all the publishers of the day returned with scant regrets; Anne wrote *Agnes Grey*; while from Emily, in dying, came an unmatched thing in English letters, that splendour of darkness, *Wuthering Heights*.

Yet another major novelist made an odd first appearance in 1846. A young woman from Coventry, who had revolted against the evangelicalism of her upbringing, this year produced a translation of Strauss' *Leben Jesus*. Strauss' critical treatment of the New Testament caused much horror and disgust among the orthodox. His translator was Miss Mary Anne Evans, to become later known as George Eliot, one of the great ethical influences of the Victorian age. This unconciliating entry was characteristic of the author of *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch*.

It was on 12 September 1846 that Robert Browning eloped with Elizabeth Barrett from Wimpole Street, a romance blessed and magnified long afterwards by Mr. Samuel Goldwyn. The *Annual Register* for this year showed its taste by reprinting "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," from *Bells and Pomegranates*.

Browning was the son of an officer of the Bank of England. The son of the respected principal partner of the sherry importers, Ruskin, Telford and Domecq, this year produced the second volume of *Modern Painters*. In 1846 Edward Lear was giving drawing lessons to Queen Victoria. He also gave the world in this year the first edition of his *Book of Nonsense*. Landor's *Hellenic Studies* was published in 1846, and the first volume of Grote's *History of Greece* appeared.

Although this beginning year of our century seems in the pages of the newspapers to be wholly concerned with the clash of economic forces, with material progress and with scientific advance, there was a spiritual restlessness that puzzled newspapers and politicians. Lord Melbourne's view that the Church should not interfere in a gentleman's private affairs was respectfully accepted by most churchmen. But certain passionate remonstrances were beginning to break the old moulds. The Oxford Movement, the High Church revival, had been one such reawakening of the spirit of men. On the Low Church side, Lord Ashley (to be better known as Shaftesbury) was led by his evangelical faith and by that sensitive spirit, which never knew any peace from the burden

of wronged innocence, to agitate constantly against the employment of little children in mines, mills and factories. There is no more disinterested character in our period than this aristocrat who refused office and preferment the better to plead the cause of the friendless.

One marks the growing political influence of the Dissenters. Their ministers were familiar figures on the platforms of the Anti-Corn Law League. Methodism, in particular, was a strong force in the social stirrings of provincial England. This warm and ardent evangel, that made men and women feel they were in an intensely personal way the sons and daughters of the Creator, gave the underdog something more than hope, it gave him self-respect. Here was a spiritual dynamic for the new Trade Union movement. Farm labourers and town workers drew from it a sense of the dignity of the human soul. If even the poorest and more degraded wretch could by his own election become a child of God and the fellow of princes, then it was plain that it was a sin against the light to treat human beings with less thought than was given to a horse or an ox. From this came that precise hue and impulse of British Labour which has set it off from the secular Socialism of the rest of Europe.

In the city of Nottingham in 1846 a youth of seventeen had lately become a Wesleyan local preacher—William Booth. Three years later he came to London to preach in slum streets—and finding Methodism too limited for “the divine incendiarism” of his spirit, was to become the great guerrilla warrior of nineteenth-century Christianity—General Booth, who would not let the Devil steal all the merry tunes, and who bore the blood-red Flag and the Glory Song into streets where policemen would venture only in pairs.

It was in February, 1846, that John Henry Newman left Oxford, not to return for thirty years to that city he loved so dearly. He had made his submission to Rome in October, 1845. The crossing of Newman from the Church of England to the Catholic faith left a mark on Victorian England that was not effaced for a great while. “An event of calamitous importance,” was Gladstone’s description, and a few years later Disraeli said the Church was still reeling from the blow.

Many men and women in that age suffered tortures of the mind

over change of faith or loss of faith. The tender and pensive music in which Newman resolved his spiritual conflict haunted the minds of his contemporaries; "Lead kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on." Doubt—the melancholy, long, withdrawing roar of the sea of faith—drew forth its own piercing strain of poetry:

"Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight  
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Charles Darwin was represented in 1846 by the publication of his *Geological Observations on South America*. And while the Commons was sitting late in tug-of-war on the Corn Laws he was collating the data for *The Origin of Species* to be published in 1859. On 11 January 1844, Darwin had written to Hooker: "At last gleams of light have come, and I am almost convinced (quite contrary to the opinion I started with) that species are not (it is like confessing a murder) immutable." Murder would not be out until fifteen years later. The theory of evolution was to create an extraordinary ferment in the life of the century. (It was, by the way, on 3 December 1846 that H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* left England for tropical seas with a young biologist named Thomas Henry Huxley aboard.) The old stage thunder of that age rattles around our heads again when we read of Disraeli, in his black velvet shooting-coat and wideawake hat, declaiming at Oxford in 1860, "What is the question now placed before society with an assurance the most astounding? The question is this: Is man an ape or an angel? My Lord, I am on the side of the angels."

It is now possible to talk of these things—of Newman's conversion, of Arnold's doubts, of the effect of the theory of evolution—without heat or without giving mortal offence. These accounts (men say) are closed. But there can be few Britons of mature age who have not been influenced, through their parents, by the strong religious passions of the Victorian age. They are in the bone and the blood, and they come out sometimes in strange forms. The Prayer Book debate in the House of Commons in 1928 astonished many foreign observers, but, less directly, one can trace

the religious emotions of a century ago in the politics of our own time.

The wider world on which John Bull looked out in 1846 bore few resemblances to the world he sees today. In the year that the *Daily News* began, France was a monarchy. Louis Philippe, the Citizen King, had narrowly escaped two attempts on his life. In May, Prince Louis Napoleon—afterwards Napoleon III, “Napoleon the Little”—that mild forerunner of the Fascist dictators of our times, had escaped from his fortress prison at Ham. The knowing ones laughed at him as a seedy adventurer who had made himself absurd by walking out in a workman’s smock, carrying a plank, and would not be heard of again. In six years’ time he became Emperor of the French.

Germany was a medley of small kingdoms and duchies. Among the insignificant items of news in 1846 was the appointment of a Prussian aristocrat of thirty-one, Otto von Bismarck, to be Deichhauptmann, which meant that he was put in charge of those dykes by which the country round the River Elbe was spared from inundations. It was a quarter of a century later that the German Empire was proclaimed at Versailles. What dykes Bismarck erected then! The world saw the waters pour over them in the spring of 1945.

Italy was in chains, as fair and hapless a captive as ever prayed to St. George. The Pope held temporal power. Pius IX was elected this year—a progressive pontiff who signalled his response to the Free Trade lead of England by lowering the tariff of the Papal States. His Holiness was reported, too, as exhibiting a lively interest in the development of railways in his dominions. When temporal power was lost in 1870, this Pope became the first prisoner of the Vatican. Japan was sealed to the outer world. Seven years were to pass before Commodore Perry was to break open that box of curses. The United States in 1846 was at war with Mexico; denounced by the *Daily News* as a bully but praised for reducing its tariff. There were 3,000,000 Negro slaves in the Southern States, and the institution seemed unassailable. Russia was being depicted by the cartoonists as a marauding and clumsy bear with a crown; by good Liberals the Czar Nicholas was feared as an aggressor and hated as a despot. The emancipation of the serfs lay seventeen years ahead. An emperor reigned in Brazil.

There was a Maori war. Canada was alarmed at the Mother Country's lowering of tariffs. There was trouble in India. The first Sikh war was costing the British severe losses, the Sikhs being the bravest fighters in India. The war ended with the Treaty of Lahore, signed on 11 March 1846.

What glittering empires of the clouds have risen, and filled the skies, then crumbled utterly away since 1846. The century of the newspaper's life has seen the upbuilding and fall of the Hohenzollern Empire and of Hitler's Reich; it has seen the breaking up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the passing of the Hapsburgs; the unification of Italy and its ruin by Mussolini; the Russian revolution; the collapse, in turn, of the Orleanist monarchy, the Second Republic, the Second Empire and the Third Republic in France; the expulsion of the once-mighty, once-dreaded Turk from Europe; the change of Japan from a hermit state to an aggressor, from a rising sun to a sun that has set; the coming into the world of that new design in world relations, the British commonwealth; the swinging march of the United States to a place of dominating economic power—and, at the end, the freeing of atomic energy.

In the outcome, the wonders of mechanical progress which the ardent characters of 1846 saw ahead outran their prophecies. It became the century of the motor car, as well as the railway. Of wireless as well as the telegraph. Of the plane as well as the balloon. From the swoop and flutter of the Wright Brothers' machine at Kitty Hawk to jet propulsion is a long, long flight.

Man invented a series of extraordinary machines—his ingenuity was unending—and he came near to destroying himself in so doing. But—to vindicate the optimistic spirits of 1846—in all the centuries that went before there were no such conquests made over disease, pain and death as in this century. The life force and the death force are seen in spectacular conflict all through that hundred years. One sees, too, during the period the social conscience in man struggling hard to draw level with his mechanical genius and his material triumphs. Each advance in technological progress brought fresh human problems crowding in upon a perplexed and out-of-breath generation. The human environment was constantly being shaken violently, broken down, then built up again to a fresh design. Men and women had to adjust them-

selves rapidly to new material conditions, and then, in turn, to adjust themselves to the social consequences of those material changes. It is not surprising that justice as well as mercy sometimes lagged in this race, and that cruel things were done by naturally well-disposed men in a hurry, men buffeted, spinning and dizzy from the pelting pace of their world.

It was in the closing year that invention, which had dominated the century, presented mankind with the atomic bomb. This was the strange crown of a century filled with the triumphs of physical science. Faraday's researches into electricity were dwarfed; and Kelvin's discoveries; and Edison's. The report of the bombing of Hiroshima in the newspapers of 7 August 1945 made the old problem of reconciling the moral sense with the machine no longer a subject for philosophic essays. It was the clamouring issue of survival. What must a world do to be saved?

There came back to one a troubling remembrance of reading that Alfred Nobel, so long ago as the 'sixties, when he invented dynamite, refused to believe that men would ever use it for blowing each other to bits. Their moral sense would forbid. Dynamite would be an agent of peace—helping the miner, blasting quarries, tearing holes out of mountains, so that the railway engineers could more easily link people to people. As the smoke from the two atom bombs that were dropped on Japan rises up in our imagination, the cloud appears to take the shape of a query mark. It is this tremendous ? that hangs over the coming century. The answer to it must be found before '2046.

On a fair and windless Sunday morning in July, 1846, travellers on the Channel packets caught their breath at a singular spectacle. From the coast of France were rising myriads upon myriads of white butterflies. This shimmering snowstorm of summer, that whirled or floated high in the air, but never fell, drifted at last towards England. No one could guess the numbers of the butterflies, for they spread out on each hand as far as the eye could measure. "Hundreds of yards of them," men said. "Heaped-up millions of them." They composed the only clouds that moved in the July sky. At noon they quite darkened the air, drawing shadows or tracing glimmerings like moonlight over the mirror of the Channel, until they vanished at last over the South Downs.



Superstitious travellers, gaping at this fantasy, sought to read the omen. A promise from heaven? But no great change came to Britain or mankind. If there was any meaning for the travellers, it was that there are inexplicable elements in the world and that nature has her wayward phantoms of beauty. Or one might have taken it to mean that poetry would always be breaking into that assured and respectable world.

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## HISTORY

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### IT WAS A STABLE WORLD

by ROBERT GRAVES

THE WORLD was stable—a compact world of manageable size, centrally governed—a Mediterranean world with Imperial Rome as the hub, the smoke of sacrifice reeking from a thousand altars and the heavenly bodies circling in foreseeable fashion overhead. True, there was another world that began at the River Euphrates, the Eastern world into which Alexander the Great had freakishly broken three centuries before. But the Romans had left it alone since losing 30,000 men at Carrhae in an attempt to advance their frontiers at Parthian expense. Oriental luxury goods—jade, silk, gold, spices, vermillion, jewels—had formerly come overland by way of the Caspian Sea and now that this route had been cut by the Huns, a few daring Greek sea-captains were sailing from Red Sea ports, catching the trade winds and loading up at Ceylon. But commercial relations were chancy.

Northward, dense forests swarming with uncivilised, red-haired, beer-swilling Germans; and foggy Britain with its chariot fighters who seemed to have stepped from the pages of Homer; and the bleak steppes of Russia peopled by mare-milking nomad Scythians. Westward, the Ocean, supposedly extending to the point where it spilt over into nothingness. Nobody had thought it worth while to test the truth of the Greek legend that far out lay a chain of islands where coconuts grew on palms and life was indolent and merry. Southward, marvellous Africa, of which only the nearest regions had been explored; from beyond came

*From THE CORNHILL, Peter Quennell, Editor*

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rewards were loot, glory, decorations for valour and farm-lands in the conquered country upon their discharge.

The technique of expansion was simple. *Divide et impera*: enter into solemn treaty with a neighbouring country, foment internal disorder, intervene in support of the weaker side on the ground that Roman honour was involved, replace the legitimate ruler with a puppet, giving him the status of subject ally; later, goad him into rebellion, seize and sack the country, burn down the temples and carry off the captive gods to adorn a triumph. Conquered territories were put under the control of a provincial governor-general, an ex-commander-in-chief, who garrisoned it, levied taxes, set up courts of summary justice, and linked the new frontiers with the old by so-called Roman roads—usually built up by Greek engineers and native forced labour. Established social and religious practices were permitted so long as they did not threaten Roman administration or offend against the broad-minded Roman standards of good taste. The new province presently became a spring-board for further aggression.

Rome was now a great jackdaw's nest, with temples and mansions newly built in solid, vulgar, imitation-Greek architectural style—much of it concrete with a thin marble facing—stuffed with loot from more ancient and beautiful cities. Typical scenes of 'the grandeur that was Rome' at the sack of Corinth. A group of smoke-blackened Roman infantrymen squatting on a priceless old master—Aristides's *The God Dionysus*—and shooting craps for possession of sacred chalices looted from Dionysus's temple. Others hacking souvenirs from the most famous relic of antiquity, the stern of the ship *Argo* which had brought back the Golden Fleece from the Caucasus more than a thousand years before. The Army commander impressing on the transport captains detailed to convey unique works of art back to Rome—'Mind you, my men, anything you lose you'll have to replace.'

The prisoners captured in these wars became slaves. The chief cause of Rome's industrial backwardness was not a lack of inventiveness but the remarkable cheapness of highly skilled slave labour. A first-class smith or weaver or potter could often be bought for about the same price that a good dairy cow would fetch nowadays, and was not much more expensive to keep. (For that matter, a Greek school-master or a qualified doctor could

be bought for only a few pounds more.) In the Mediterranean the winter, in general, is short and mild, and the Romans could import unlimited cheap grain from Egypt, Libya and Tripoli—it was not for some centuries that overcultivation made a dust-bowl of the whole North African coast. Olive-oil, dried fish, chick-peas, wine and fruit were also in plentiful supply. Corn-mills driven by water power had been known for some generations, yet were little used: it was a principle of industrial economy to keep one's slaves, especially women, in good physical condition by making them do their daily pull at the lever of a hand-mill. And though the carpenter had developed into a highly skilled cabinet-maker, three more centuries passed before the principle of the watermill was combined with that of the saw. Still more remarkable, the steam-engine had been invented by one Ctesibius—who also invented a water-clock and a hydraulic organ—and a working model had long been on show in the lighthouse at Alexandria where it was used as a donkey-engine. Capitalists were unimpressed: 'Introduce mechanical hauling into industry and encourage laziness in the workers.' In the same spirit the Emperor Tiberius, Augustus's successor, put to death an inventor who brought him a specimen of unbreakable and malleable glass: the discovery would have thrown the jewellery trade into disorder and depreciated the value of gold bullion.

On the whole, slaves were treated well and encouraged to hard work and obedience by being given occasional tips and allowed to earn money in their off hours. Eventually they could hope to buy themselves free, though still owing certain duties as freedmen to their masters; and their children would be free-born. It was dangerous to starve slaves or flog them too freely; indeed, gross cruelty to a slave was now a penal offence. This lesson had been learned in the great Slave Revolt under the gladiator Spartacus two generations before, which had all but succeeded in making the slaves their masters' masters. Slavery was now regarded by industrialists as a safeguard against the pretensions of the free-born working classes, who could not compete in price against well-organised and highly financed slave labour. Strikes of workingmen were exceptional: as when the Levite bakers in the Temple at Jerusalem walked out on being refused a 100 per cent. rise in pay. The High Priest tried to break the strike by importing bakers

from the rival Jewish Temple at Leontopolis in Egypt, but their shew-bread was not up to Jerusalem standard and the strikers gained their demands.

At the apex of the social pyramid, which was still nominally Republican, stood the Emperor Augustus. As leader of the winning side in the Civil Wars, caused by murderous rivalry between noble families, he had been invested with temporary dictatorial powers, religious as well as civil, which he often undertook to relinquish when the time should be ripe; but it never was. Under him in descending order of importance came the remains of the nobility, who formed a rubber-stamp Senate and from whom all high-ranking Army officers and Government officials were drawn; next, the Knights, merchant families eligible for less distinguished offices; next, the free-born Roman citizens with full civil rights, including that of voting at the free democratic elections which no longer took place, and exemption from the servile punishment of crucifixion. After these, free-born foreigners with more limited right; then freedmen; lastly, slaves.

In the higher income groups the birth-rate fell steadily despite bachelor taxes and personal appeals for fertility by the Emperor. Few society women could be bothered to bear children in any quantity and preferred to let their husbands amuse themselves in sporting-houses or with Greek mistresses. The society woman's day was a full one: 'Madam, your warm cinnamon milk, and the bath is ready.' 'Madam, the masseuse, the chiropodist, the hairdresser.' 'The jeweller has called to show madam the Indian emeralds.' 'The chief chef wishes to ask madam's advice about the wild-boar steaks. He is of opinion that they should hang a day or two longer.' 'Has madam decided after all to attend the wedding of her third cousin, the Lady Metella? It is to-day.' 'Madam's pet monkey has, I regret to report, been at his tricks again in the master's study. Yes, madam, I have squared the master's secretary and, please, he has undertaken to procure madam a copy of that charming bawdy little Greek novel that she picked up at Corbulo's yesterday.' 'My Lady Lentula's compliments and will madam confirm last night's bet of one thousand gold pieces to three hundred against Leek Green in the second race to-morrow?'

There was a constant recruitment of the nobility from the

merchant class, and rich commoners went up into the merchant class and were privileged to wear a gold thumb-ring and sit in seats reserved for them at the theatre immediately behind the nobility. Morals among the less fortunately born were based largely on social ambition. Conviction for petty felonies disqualified a man from membership of the social clubs of his class; serious felony degraded him. There was also a vague fear that crimes, even when successfully concealed, might be punished in a shadowy Hell with perpetual tortures. Belief in the islands of Elysium, where virtue was rewarded with a life of perpetual bliss, was still vague; besides, Homer had made it clear that these abodes were reserved for royalty. Ordinary citizens became twittering ghosts and went down to Hell, and stayed there except for an annual ticket-of-leave holiday between owl-cry and cock-crow, when their pious descendants put food out for them to lick at, and themselves kept carefully indoors.

Among the governing classes superstitious fear of evil omens, ghosts and bogeys contrasted with the fashionable scepticism about the gods. However, the majesty of Law and the sanctity of treaties depended in theory on the official Olympian cult, and so did the complicated system of national holidays and popular entertainments. Jokes at the expense of cross, lecherous old Father Jupiter, his shrewish wife Juno, and his clever unmarried daughter Minerva—the Roman trinity—were confined to intimate gatherings. But gods and goddesses, so far from being jealous guardians of family morals, permitted and even demanded periodical orgies of drunkenness and sexual promiscuity as healthy vents for popular emotion. Their images also presided at the wild-beast shows, chariot races, gladiatorial fights, dances, plays, musical entertainments and displays of juggling and contortionism, arranged in their honour by endowed priesthoods.

There was no system of public education even for the free-born except in Greek cities that still prided themselves on their high standard of culture, and among the Jews everywhere, for whom attendance at the synagogue school was now a religious obligation. Elsewhere, reading, writing and arithmetic were luxuries reserved for the governing and mercantile classes with their stewards, secretaries, accountants and agents. The Jews were at once a comfort and a worry to the central government. Though

industrious, law-abiding and peaceful wherever they were left alone, they were not merely a nation of perhaps three and a half millions settled in Palestine under the rule of Herod the Great, a petty king appointed by the Emperor, with a tribal god, a Temple, and established festivals. They were also a huge religious fraternity, including a great many converts of non-Jewish race, whose first article of faith was that there was only one God, and that intimate contact with Goddess-worshippers was disgusting and sinful. Far more Jews lived outside Palestine than in it, spread about in small or large communities from one end of the world to another and over the edge of the world in Babylonia. They constituted a serious obstacle to the Imperial policy of encouraging provincials to pay divine honours to the Emperor, but were still allowed perfect religious freedom. The distinction between Semites and Europeans had not yet been drawn; for the Spartans, who were pure Greeks, officially claimed cousinship with the Jews in virtue of a common descent from Abraham. There was, however, strong local jealousy of Jews who had broken into Greek commercial spheres, with which went resentment of them as over-righteous spoilsports.

Colour was no problem. If the question had even arisen—but it never did—whether the black races were inferior to the white the answer would immediately have been found in Homer, who was quoted as an inspired authority in all matters of general morality: 'Homer relates that the blessed gods themselves used to pay complimentary visits to the Blameless Ethiopians.' Colour was not popularly associated with slavery, since slaves were for the most part white, and nothing prevented coloured monarchs from owning white slaves if honestly come by. Nor was miscegenation frowned upon. Augustus rewarded his ally King Juba II, a Moor, with the hand of Selene, the beautiful daughter of Cleopatra, the Greek queen of Egypt, and his own late brother-in-law Mark Antony.

The Romans were oddly backward in military development, except in the arts of entrenchment, siege warfare and infantry drill with javelin and stabbing-sword. They never practised archery even for sport, or formed their own cavalry units, but relied for flank protection of their solid, slow-moving infantry masses on allied lancers and horse-archers, including many coloured squad-

rons. To join the Army usually meant staying with one's regiment until the age of sixty, and campaigning was arduous, especially against active and light-armed foresters or mountaineers. The soldier's load weighed more than 80 lb., which he had to hump for fifteen or twenty miles a day in all weathers; rations were poor, comforts few, pay irregular, floggings frequent. But peacetime garrison duty in big frontier camps was pleasant enough. A regiment kept the same station for generations, and the camp gradually developed into a city as camp-followers set up general stores under the protection of the fortifications, and soldiers married native women and built permanent huts. In remote outposts of the Empire time dragged. Last year an inscription was found on the site of a small Roman camp on the Libyan frontier to this effect: 'The Company commander fears that it will be a long time before their promised relief arrives from Rome; meanwhile the company have made the best of a bad job and hereby dedicate this commodious swimming-pool to the Goddess of Army Welfare.'

The swimming-pool was a Greek institution. It was from the Greeks that the Romans had learned practically all they knew: law, literary technique, public speaking, philosophy, engineering, music, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, stagecraft and acting, domestic and industrial science, sanitation, and athletics. But, with a few notable exceptions, they were all barbarians at heart, and in athletics, for example, showed no innate sense of sportsmanship or any appreciation of the finer points of play. In the public ring they abandoned the Greek style of boxing with light leather gloves in favour of Mack Sennett knuckle-dusters studded with iron points with which outsize heavyweights slogged great chunks off one another.

No great epidemics of plague, typhus and cholera, such as ravaged Europe in the Middle Ages, are recorded in this epoch. Well-regulated water supply and sewage system in cities, official supervision of foodstuffs and wine exposed for sale, and a general determination to enjoy life to the full while it lasted: all this increased popular resistance to disease. Medicine, too, was in a saner state than it reached again before the nineteenth century: cures were effected by tried herbal remedies, fomentations, dieting, exercise, massage and spa waters. Greek surgeons following



in the wake of Roman armies had got a better knowledge of the interior of the human body from battlefield observation than hitherto from dissection of Egyptian mummies in the Alexandrian medical school; and dentists undertook fillings and complicated bridge work as well as extractions. Mail and transport services ran smoothly throughout the Empire; the insurance rate for shipping was low, now that piracy had been suppressed, and losses by burglary and fire were infrequent. Bureaucracy had just begun rearing its anonymous head: the Emperor Augustus, grown too old and weary to undertake all the official business that falls to a dictator, allowed his ex-slave secretariat to issue minutes, demands and routine orders under his seal.

Typical success story: M. Fullanus Atrox, grandson of a Sicilian slave, has made money in hogs, invested it in a suburban tile-factory and tenement-rents in a central block at Rome. He now sells a half interest in the factory, which is placing heavy orders in Spain and North Africa, buys a villa near Naples with central heating, baths, a picture gallery, formal gardens, stabling, twenty acres of good land and accommodation for fifty slaves—the very villa where his father once stoked the furnace. He marks the happy occasion by presenting a solid gold salver engraved with poplar leaves to the nearby temple of Hercules—it will create a good impression locally. At the same time he sends his son to the university of Athens.

It was a stable world. But the farther from the hub one went the uglier grew the scene, especially after Augustus's succession by less humane and energetic Emperors. When the poorly paid Roman armies of occupation were quartered in the provinces of Asia Minor and Syria, the rich man was bled but the poor man was skinned. Banditry, beggary, blackmail and squalor abounded. Conditions were as bad after the death of Herod the Great in the Protectorate of Judæa, where communism was already in operation among the ascetic communities of the Dead Sea area, and in the Native State of Galilee. The cost of living in Galilee during Jesus's Ministry was excessively high. Everything was taxed separately: houses, land, fruit trees, cattle, carts, fishing-boats, market produce, salt. There was also a poll-tax, a road tax and taxes on exports and imports. Worse: the collection of taxes was leased to private financiers and sub-leased by them to contractors who had

to buy police protection at a high cost. The Disciples were poor working-men with dependants. When they were on the road their annual out-of-pocket account—apart even from money handed out to the distressed—can hardly have grossed less than £3,000. But out they went, two by two, deploring the instability of a world that was based on greed, lovelessness and the power of the sword. Unexpectedly, St. Luke mentions among their financial backers the wife of a high finance officer of the rapacious Native Court.

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## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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### LEFTISM IN THE ATOMIC AGE

by NORMAN ANGELL

IN THE DISCUSSIONS of the atomic bomb the most fundamental considerations seem to get the least attention. Little consideration, for instance, seems to have been given in this context to the truth that men, particularly in political matters, are not guided by the facts but by their opinions about the facts, opinions which can so readily, by common emotional processes, become the kind held by millions of educated Germans who were passionately convinced that the war was caused by Jews; or by the tens of millions of intelligent Americans who believed after the First World War that it had been caused by armament makers or by bankers used as tools by British capitalists bent on swollen profits (like those, presumably, which British capitalists are now enjoying)—ideas voiced by all Communists and some Socialists during the first two years of the war just ended.

The history of every revolution which devours its children, of every religion which sets up inquisitions to rack and burn the heretic for the greater glory of God, should warn us that we are far more likely to throw the bomb at each other, quarreling over rival doctrines than quarreling over conflicting interests. Interests we can compromise with no sense of sin; ideologies must be held inviolate, and passionate conviction, or fanaticism, becomes a virtue.

But it is a virtue which in the atomic age may destroy us. We know from repeated experience that two men of differing social doctrine might travel together over Russia, witness exactly the

*From THE NATION, Freda Kirchwey, Editor*  
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same things, and return with conflicting accounts and diametrically opposed conclusions. Access to the facts, though indispensable, is not enough. With it must go a realization of the need to discipline doctrinal prepossessions which distort interpretation of the facts. If in 1920 the American public rejected Wilson and his policy, embraced isolationism, and after a decade and a half of discussion sanctioned the Neutrality Act—which had its part in bringing on World War II—it was not because in all those years the facts were unavailable. The trouble, as in the British acceptance of appeasement as the road to peace, was the mood and temper in which the facts were selected and interpreted. The temper of nationalism has heretofore been the main mischief. That has now been largely replaced, or perhaps reinforced, by the rancorous partisanship of social and economic doctrine, which can be just as intolerant and blinding, and even more dangerous.

Assuming such habits of the human mind are encouraged, what chance has a world parliament of agreeing upon the ultimate purpose of power in the international society of the future? Yet that is the purpose upon which we must agree if world authority is both to control the bomb and to preserve the freedoms we fought for in two world wars. If “peace” alone, whatever its price in freedom, is our aim, we could have had it by submission to Hitler or the Japanese.

Whether or not we achieve freedom as well as peace will depend upon our answer to this question: Is the purpose of the future world authority to uphold the true doctrine in matters of political, economic, and social faith, or is it to uphold the right to challenge the doctrine laid down by authority, to criticize and discuss it and reject it? More and more of late the left has drifted away from this latter position of freedom toward the position that power must be used to enforce the true doctrine. This tendency endangers the basic principle upon which modern free societies have grown up.

Under leftist influences the clear and simple purpose with which the war began has not merely been changed; it has been reversed, or stands in obvious danger of so being. The war began as the assertion of the right of each nation to be free from external coercion as to the social or political system under which it preferred to live, the assertion of the right of each to his own way

of life so long as that did not threaten others. When Britain and France faced what they knew would be the almost annihilating cost of a second war within a quarter-century in order to defend Poland, it was not because they regarded Poland as a model state, or liked its methods, but because the first of all national rights, the right to exist, had to be defended if nations—including the British and French nations—were to retain that right. The right of each to choose its system was implicit in the action of the Western democracies. The effect of America's entrance into the war, for instance, was to make sure that Russia should have the right to remain Communist, just as the effect of Russia's entrance was to help America retain capitalism, or free enterprise. This "right to choose" represents the one completely common interest of all nations, overriding doctrinal or ideological differences—a common purpose upon which peace and freedom may be built. If as a condition precedent to cooperation in the war Russia had had to renounce communism, or America capitalism, there would have been no cooperation, even for war. And cooperation for peace is much more difficult.

Soon after the war began, its original purpose of defending the right of each nation to its own mode of life free of foreign subjugation was repudiated by much of the left. "Mere" national survival was not, we were told, the real purpose of the war. Its purpose was to bring about a revolutionary social and political change the world over. It was to be the midwife of a new social order, as a common expression put it. It was, in other words, to bring in socialism, though there is nothing upon which Socialists differ so bitterly as on what socialism really is and what measures are necessary for its success—as witness the successive changes of party line in Russia, the differences which led to the purges, the fact that Moscow is in much deeper conflict with a Socialist British government than it was with a Tory one, as Molotov himself avowed.

Professor Harold Laski, discussing the bomb in what he seemed to regard as the appropriate spirit, and speaking in this country while the loan asked for by the Labor government from capitalist America was still undecided, insisted that the danger of atomic war lies, not in the nature of the public mind, not in tendencies within all of us that have come down from age-old tribal conflict

and need discipline, but in the presence in Western society of "the business man." On no account, he said, should there be any compromise with this "capitalist class." Understanding and adjustment are out of the question. The capitalist order must be utterly abolished and a completely new civilization erected. He assured us that Nazism—which happens to be short for National Socialism—was "the culmination of a society built upon the anarchy of free enterprise." He added: "There is no middle way. Free enterprise and the market economy mean war; socialism and the planned economy mean peace. All attempts to find a compromise are a satanic illusion."

Earlier, Laski had assured us in *The Nation* that the present is "no time for half measures," that "liberal democracy has broken down . . . it belongs to an age that has passed." Note the implications. Retention of any vestige of capitalism means war, which means atomic war, which means annihilation. Taken at its face value, the proposition justifies the extreme crusading form of Russian policy, since safety from the utter physical destruction of atomic warfare depends on complete liquidation of capitalism everywhere and the substitution for it of pure, unqualified socialism. But apart from the bitter disagreements among Socialists as to what true socialism is, we know that for a very long time there are likely to remain in the United States and perhaps in England features of economic life which the purist would condemn as belonging to the fatal system of "free enterprise and the market economy"; just as recently some leftist purists have excommunicated Switzerland and Sweden as fascist states.

Our concern at the moment is how to establish with Russia the same sort of confidence about the use of atomic weapons that already exists between Britain and the United States. No one in the United States is really disturbed by the fact that Britain possesses the bomb secret and Canada its raw material. The confidence exists despite much raucous ill-feeling over the loan, Palestine, Greece, Java, Siam, India. Why, then, misgiving in the case of Russia? Hatred of socialism? But success of the British form of socialism is likely to be more disturbing to the American capitalist than anything Russia has produced in the last thirty years. The reason for the greater misgiving concerning Russia's possession of the bomb lies in political facts which so much of the

left insists are of secondary importance. To put it bluntly, many in the West fear what might be done with atomic armaments by a dictator—who tomorrow may not be Stalin—or a small committee not subject to free public criticism, lacking the mental and moral discipline which comes from criticism, not subject to parliamentary check or removal, as was even such an able and popular leader as Churchill in the West.

On the Russian side there are equally deep fears of the West. For a quarter of a century the Russian people have been indoctrinated with the official theology that peace and capitalism are incompatible, that the West can never be trusted so long as it retains its present economic system, that Western democracy is a sham since power rests in the hands of a capitalist class ready to seize any opportunity to weaken Russia and undermine its security. Much of this has been recently reaffirmed by Stalin himself, who reasserted, undiluted, all the slogans, all the incantations. Obviously, so long as such a view is dominant in Russia relations with the West will be extremely difficult. And much of our left is at pains to assure Moscow that the Russian view is entirely sound and Russian suspicions entirely justified—which is hardly a good beginning for understanding, unless it is assumed that the West will accept the Russian system and the Russian way of life. It is the more tragic because if the simple facts of experience instead of abstract doctrine and rival ideologies governed policy, a basis of cooperation for peace could assuredly be found. But, once more, fact and doctrine are in amazing conflict, as events reveal.

In the inter-war years the left was insistent that the capitalist West was bent upon alliance with Germany to crush socialist Russia, that the impending war would be along the lines of the Marxist "class conflict." This theory and forecast can now be judged by the event, the facts, which are these: (1) When a Tory capitalist government in Britain declared war it was not against socialist Russia but against fascist Germany. (2) It was Communist Russia, not the capitalist West, which formed a pact with fascist Germany, a pact which, the probabilities indicate, enabled Germany to begin the war before the Western democracies were ready. (3) Communist parties everywhere for nearly two years aided, not the Western democracies, but Germany, by

moral and sometimes material sabotage of the Allied war effort. (4) When Hitler offered Britain peace on the condition that, in return for keeping its empire, it remain neutral while Germany crushed Russia, it was a Tory-imperialist-capitalist Prime Minister of a direly harassed Britain who refused the offer and became instead the ally of socialist Russia. (5) The resources of the greatest capitalist power in the world, America, were freely given to insure the victory of Communist Russia and enable it to become the greatest military power in the world.

These are the facts. They invalidate a great part of the leftist thesis of the last twenty years. If they were faced instead of being systematically distorted, they would be recognized as furnishing a basis for peaceful cooperation between Russia and the West.

If the purpose of international cooperation is to enable each nation to live free from outside dictation under the particular social, political, and economic system which it prefers and for which its background and circumstances fit it, we know that the thing can be done, because we did it during the war. When Churchill, on that fateful Sunday morning of June, 1941, offered Russia Britain's fullest aid in the fight against aggression, he did not exact that in the future Russia must abandon communism. He realized that the two nations had a common interest which transcended ideological or economic differences. No one believed then that the Allies were fighting for some particular kind of socialism not yet defined or agreed upon, some kind which must, presumably, be agreeable to Moscow. Does anyone really believe now that peace or freedom lies along the road of making international power the instrument of some particular economic, or social, or political creed, as once the church so mistakenly attempted to make force the instrument of its religious creed, establishing its Gestapo or N. K. V. D. in the shape of the Inquisition?

The task of a Russian government compelled to ask heavy sacrifices of its people will of course be greatly facilitated if it can paint a picture of a hostile world ready to pounce upon the socialist fatherland and can quote leaders and learned professors of the West in support of that picture. The nationalism to which every government at times appeals is immensely reinforced by the Marxist theology. And any foreign office would rejoice to possess such agents and allies in every country of the world as Russia



possesses in the Communist parties of the world and in their fellow-traveling allies. But since power is, for any government or nation, a heady wine, we do not add to the chances of peace by deliberately, through our own action, making the power of one particular nation completely overwhelming, especially a nation persuaded by its government that it is menaced by the very existence of the form of society prevailing outside its borders.

The issue is not one between socialism and capitalism. There is not a capitalist nation in the world which is not accepting increasing degrees of socialism. The issue is whether social development shall be carried out by the democratic processes, with agreement of the groups concerned achieved by open, fair, and decent discussion, or shall be imposed by the "dictatorship of the proletariat," which means the violence, both moral and physical, of small, tightly organized parties forming a new privileged class prepared to abolish the older political freedoms.

The issue is essentially political, not economic; at bottom, like most political issues, it is psychological—the desire of one party or sect to dominate its rivals, a human impulse now rationalized by a pretentious and misleading philosophy of historical necessity.

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## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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### BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

by KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE RELATIONS of states are chiefly determined by geography, strategy, and economic interest. Ideologies also play a part. But countries with opposite political, religious, or economic systems have always been able to form alliances which served their national interests, while no similarity of outlook or kinship of blood prevents a war if the balance of power determines it. It would therefore be mistaken to assume that because there is an antipathy between the Soviet Union and the Western Democracies that therefore conflict is inevitable.

These generalizations are sufficiently illustrated by the past fluctuations of Anglo-Russian relations. Allies against France in the Napoleonic Wars, we fought in the Crimea thirty years later for reasons that have never been apparent. In the next fifty years British official opinion feared Russia as an imperial Power that threatened communications with India; but after the formation of the Triple Entente early in the twentieth century, our publicists found new and unexpected virtues in the Russian masses who had been hitherto feared as "barbarian hordes." Meanwhile, Liberal opinion, which disliked our military commitments to Russia and did not share official fear of Germany, denounced the tyranny of Czardom and even as late as August 3rd, 1914, opposed the war mainly on the ground that it would make us the ally of a reactionary Asiatic Power. The invasion of Belgium swept that consideration into the background and substituted for it the hope that the Russian steam-roller would push the Germans into the

*From THE POLITICAL QUARTERLY, Leonard Woolf, Editor*

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Baltic. With the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 the picture of Russia presented to the British public changed overnight, and the Bolshevik menace remained to bedevil our politics until Germany again invaded Russia in 1941. For a time, the Soviet Union was popular even with Conservatives, many of whom admitted that they were wrong in assuming that a Communist power could not withstand a German attack and who hoped they were wrong in thinking that Russia was still Communist. The friendship, publicly announced in the Anglo-Soviet Alliance, reached its height after the defence of Stalingrad, and seemed to be cemented at Yalta. No soon was the war over, however, than the old strategic problems reasserted themselves and the ideological quarrel was reopened.

It is clear even from this brief summary of our past relations that Britain and the Soviet Union are not necessarily friends or necessarily foes. Whether the alliance is perpetuated, whether we ever again go to war or whether we both accept an international organization which offers other methods of settling disputes depends not primarily on whether we are capitalist or socialist, but on the opinions of those who rule both countries about the policy that best suits their interests.

The estimates which both sides make of their interests depends, however, to a considerable extent on personal and ideological factors. If, for instance, we both have economic interests in Persia we may both maintain them by agreement (as we did before 1914 at the expense of Persia) or, if our suspicions are sufficiently great, we may allow them to act as a permanent source of irritation and danger.

The inheritance of suspicion is enormous. Few British people remember, but no Russian forgets, that the last war ended in Archangel and not in Berlin. To the Russians, history between the two wars can be summarized as an effort first to crush the Revolution in its infancy, then to belittle and boycott it, and, finally, to aid German imperialism to overthrow it. The Munich agreement and Britain's refusal to engage in staff conversations at Bucharest at Stalin's request in the spring of 1939 finally confirmed this interpretation of capitalist policy; much that the British public has found inexplicable in Russian policy follows from the fact that up to the invasion of Normandy in 1944, the

Soviet leaders as well as the Russian public believed that Goebbels was right in prophesying that we should make peace with the Germans and join with them in making war on the Soviet Union.

Two policies are always in competition in the U.S.S.R. Up till 1934 the dominant Russian policy, based on the view that Allied intervention against Russia would be renewed, sought to stir up revolution and sow discord in the ranks of capitalism. From that date, when the U.S.S.R. entered the League of Nations, up to the retirement of Litvinov in the spring of 1939, the U.S.S.R. played for collective security with the West. The negotiations for an Anglo-Soviet alliance in the summer of 1939 were conducted in a half-hearted spirit by both countries; they were abruptly terminated by the German-Soviet agreement which was the Russian retort to Chamberlain's agreement at Munich. Churchill's historic speech pledging full British support for Russia when Germany crossed her frontier in 1941 was the beginning of a period of collaboration, forced upon both Powers by their common enemy. Now, after the war, many people assume that Stalin and his advisers have once again returned to the doctrinaire view that it is only in the case of a desperate struggle between capitalist powers that Russia can work in harmony with the western democracies. I believe, however, that no such decision has been finally made, that the duality of policy still exists in the Soviet Union and that the possibility of a working agreement still exists.

If Russia has had two policies, so has Britain. The difference is that in Russia a few people make decisions of policy and can switch quickly, while in Britain fluctuating trends of opinion and shifts of policy are far more complex and difficult to disentangle. It was perfectly possible for Britain to continue two policies towards Russia at the same time; a steady anti-Soviet drive could be maintained by the Foreign Office, supported by Conservative opinion, while quite a large part of the public, and even the Cabinet, were making genuine efforts to improve relations. The Russians have always found it difficult to believe that Britain was serious about the Anglo-Soviet alliance whilst we financed an exiled Polish Government which openly planned war against the U.S.S.R. and published (on paper allowed them by the Ministry of Information) numerous newspapers devoted to vilifying every-

thing Soviet. Similar examples could be quoted in the story of our policy towards Yugoslavia, Greece, and elsewhere.

Soviet fears and suspicions have been increased by Britain's choice of diplomats in Eastern Europe. They have often represented business interests, which naturally desired to regain their old place in countries that had come under Russian influence; alternatively our representatives have been diplomats of the old school who had no contact with, and no understanding of, the new forces at work. Our legations could scarcely avoid becoming centres of intrigue against the U.S.S.R. To this must be added that Russian Intelligence, admittedly brilliant in the realm of security, is ludicrously inefficient when it comes to estimating the forces at work in countries outside Eastern Europe. It is a pathetic fact that Russian publicists seem unable to estimate the importance to be attached to, say, a speech by Commander Bower, a Resolution of the Labour Party Conference, or a Trafalgar Square Demonstration. In dealing with Finland the Kremlin seems to have been seriously deceived about the strength of Communism amongst the Finnish workers. To-day much that is published and done in Moscow suggests that no reliable summary of the trends of opinion in this country reaches the Soviet Union.

The capacity of democratic countries for doing with their right hands things of which their left hands are unaware is as important in Anglo-Russian diplomacy as the Russian capacity for retorting to real or imagined slights by unilateral actions designed to create *faits accomplis*. Let me illustrate this point by two examples. On one occasion a paragraph appeared in *Pravda* stating that Britain was favourably considering an offer of a separate peace made to us by von Papen at Istanbul. The publication of this paragraph at a time when relations between Britain and Russia were particularly good was bewildering. It may have been intended as a counter to some German diplomatic move and have reflected merely the depth of Russian suspicion. But it is believed to have been the Soviet method of expressing resentment at the arrival, unknown to the Russians, of British agents in Rumania. Again, at San Francisco the Russians did not publicly protest at the American decision to fortify strategic islands in the Pacific, nominally against Japan, but obviously directed against Soviet power in the Far East. The Russian retort was to increase her demands in Eastern Europe. The San Francisco Conference is summarized

for me by the following imaginary but substantially accurate conversation:

*The Americans:* "We are taking over the following strategic islands. As America is never 'imperialist,' we shall make them trusteeships."

*The British:* "Good. Then your administration there will be responsible to the new trusteeship authority."

*The Americans:* "Certainly not. That would be much too dangerous. There is not much native population to consider. They are strategic positions."

*The British:* "Then they will be trusteeships not under the trusteeship authority?"

*The Americans:* "Just so."

*Mr. Molotov (looking up from the table):* "I demand that Britain and America at once recognize the Lublin Government."

This complicated game of chess, in which the reply to a gambit on one side of the board is an attack on the other, had the worst effect on world opinion. Certainly Mr. Molotov formed the impression that England and America "ganged up" against him at San Francisco, and the Soviet preference for decisions made purely by the Big Three was reinforced by this discovery of the large number of votes which Britain and America could mobilize against Russia at any world assembly of the United Nations. The U.S.S.R. was obviously right on the issue of Argentina's membership of U.N.O., but she was outvoted. Russia's popularity dwindled fast, however, as it was realized that her actions in Eastern Europe were increasingly unilateral and could not easily be reconciled with the Yalta agreement about prior consultation. It is now known that the Foreign Office and State Department were in fact informed that Russia intended to set up the Renner Government in Austria, and neither Washington nor London had any objection to the composition of that government. But they objected because Russia set up this government without waiting for their final approval. There is now strong ground for believing that Soviet generals (several of whom have disappeared from the public scene) actually went further in Europe than Stalin intended, and acted on their own responsibility. It is also clear that Russia became less co-operative as a result of a series of events which greatly weakened the position which she may have hoped would be hers at the conclusion of the Japanese war.

The first of these was the failure to obtain the loan which the

Soviet Union needed from the United States. The devastation of the Ukraine and the Donbas is the greatest known in history; the number of military and civilian persons killed during the war in Russia is believed to approach the appalling figure of twenty millions; the Soviet Union desperately needs machinery and she cannot this time afford to wait for two five-year plans before providing her public with consumer goods. Stalin is therefore faced with a grave economic impasse which explains in some degree Russia's excessive demands for machinery from Germany and Eastern Europe. Moreover, there was no agreement at Yalta about the future of Germany, and no detailed agreement at Potsdam, and as relations worsened for other reasons Russia's determination to prevent Germany again becoming a powerful State, which could be used by the Allies against her, became more pronounced. The policy of wholesale expulsions from Eastern Europe, carried out mainly by Poles and Czechs, greatly increased the already intractable problems set before the Allied administrators in Germany, and has led the British authorities to believe that Russia desires that Germany should be a permanent slum even if the result is to reduce Europe as a whole to a Soviet standard of living. The result has been to intensify the danger of that often predicted Western swing towards Germany which Russia herself feared. A section of the Left, already angry because Russia had gone so far in modifying her own internal socialism and encouraging a national spirit among her people, was now roused on humane grounds on behalf of Germany, while a section of the Right, which had loudly demanded the total subjection of Germany, began to show the same signs of favouring German recovery as it did after the last war.

A second set of circumstances on which Stalin cannot have counted was the failure of the harvest in Eastern Europe and the extreme unpopularity of the Russians in countries where they were first welcomed as liberators. The fact is that few of the disciplined Soviet troops survived Stalingrad and the subsequent fighting in East Prussia, and the southern armies, especially that of General Malinowsky, were ill-disciplined, Asiatic troops who had learnt a bitter lesson of hatred as they laboriously crossed the devastated regions of Russia and who arrived to discover undreamt-of luxuries in Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and even

Poland. Discipline took long to restore; rape and loot destroyed the credit of the Russian armies to an extent which was only fully realized when the Hungarian and Austrian elections decisively repudiated Communism. A further result of the behaviour of Russian soldiers and a partial breakdown of the Russian administration was to alienate British and Americans with whom they came into contact. A third factor was the unexpectedly sudden end of the Japanese war, which reduced Russia's status as an ally in the Far East and which showed that America was for the time armed with the atomic bomb. The subsequent refusal of America to share the technical secrets of the atomic bomb has confirmed every Russian suspicion. *Pravda* has denounced the Anglo-American policy of opposing Russia's plans in areas which she dominates, as "atomic democracy."

Finally, the disappearance of Mr. Churchill from the British political scene and the election of an overwhelming Labour majority is probably held in Moscow to be in the long run advantageous. In the short run, however, it has certainly deranged Russian plans. The Conservatives, whose political friends on the Continent are mostly dead or discredited, have only been able to champion exiled kings and to yearn fruitlessly for a return to a *status quo* which has been swept away in the war and the subsequent revolutions. Mr. Bevin and the Labour Government offered a positive leadership to social democracy in Europe, and their advent to power has stimulated forces of opposition to Communism.

The Tories were willing to collaborate with Russia on a simple basis of interest, which in Stalin's mind appears to have been the acceptance of spheres of influence by the Big Three Powers with an understanding that they would meet to settle frontier disputes. This was indeed Roosevelt's original conception at the Teheran Conference. But the death of Mr. Roosevelt, the sudden end of the war with Japan, and the advent of a Labour Government in Britain altered this.

Both Britain and America, especially after the failure of the Foreign Ministers' Conference in London, favoured a return to an organization more like that of the League of Nations, in which small Powers, most of which are to-day satellites of great Powers, would have full rights of expression. Russia, which desires above everything to be accepted and respected as one of the three Great



Powers, apparently feels in a position to maintain herself in a Three-Power Conference, but feels that she may be isolated in a general assembly of all the nations.

What then should British policy be in relation to the U.S.S.R.? One clear-cut view is that Russia, for reasons of interest and Marxist doctrine, holds that western democracy is irreconcilably her enemy, and will herself make peace impossible. The American Big-Navy school maintains on the flimsiest grounds that war between Russia and America is sooner or later inevitable, and that the Far East is its probable theatre. This school scarcely troubles to lower its voice as it demands a swift war and victory over the Soviet Union, while Russia is weakened and disorganized after the war, and America is highly armed and equipped with the atomic bomb. The argument is indeed pushed even further; it has been suggested by Lord Russell, for instance, that an American victory over the U.S.S.R. would give America a permanent and unchallengeable position of world hegemony and make further war impossible.

This argument cannot be sustained. It is true that the atomic bomb might for a time prove effective against Russia, though it could not be decisive. No one knows how far Russia is herself equipped with similar weapons, but that she is concentrating on developing them is certain. Moreover, a country of great spaces such as the Soviet Union is the least vulnerable in atomic warfare. Even if the United States forces were to succeed in overrunning the U.S.S.R., they would be even more helpless in dealing with the problem they had created than the Allies are to-day in Germany. Neither British troops nor G.I.'s could be induced to fight such a war, and even if they were, neither America nor Britain could possibly occupy and hold Russia. Moreover, the whole argument that to defeat the U.S.S.R. would make America permanently secure and dominant is based on a fallacious view of the atomic bomb, production of which, according to experts, will be possible before long in any industrial State. All the scientific knowledge necessary is already at the disposal of scientists everywhere; the temporary advantage possessed by America is only that of having begun the still difficult, expensive and slow process of manufacture. To-day it takes many months to manufacture a small number of atomic bombs; Russia and other countries may

already be far advanced in the release of atomic energy by less laborious methods. In any case America would not be in a position to dominate the world, since in a world of Powers which would certainly resent American domination, American cities would be singularly vulnerable to attack from numerous other countries which have the advantage of less centralized administration and more scattered populations.

If we rule out the immediate attack on Russia as politically, morally, and strategically unsound, we are left with two alternative policies. The first is to use the present period of Russia's comparative weakness to force her back from one position after another, and to isolate her from the rest of the world. The effect must be to increase Russia's determination to concentrate on war production and to make war inevitable.

The last policy is difficult, but the only one that could lead to good results. If, as I believe, it is true that some of Stalin's important advisers still desire collaboration with the West, then there is good hope of success. Those who have worked with Soviet officials on international agencies such as U.N.R.R.A., all report to the same effect. Soviet officials are extremely suspicious and refer all decisions to Moscow. But a technique of co-operation, involving much patience as well as frankness, can achieve results. The Russians must be told before a public session what the Allied proposals are, and given an opportunity of full discussion. In one case after another where this has been done, they have proved reasonable. A notable success was achieved in the difficult question of a joint procedure for trying war criminals. U.N.R.R.A., which now has Russian officials in some of its high executive positions, is another notable example of successful collaboration. Even in Berlin, where the behaviour of the Russian troops has infuriated the British, the high-ranking Russian officers have, according to their British and American colleagues, proved highly intelligent and co-operative. I still believe that were we to put forward serious and detailed proposals, stating what we propose to do and asking for Russian co-operation, we shall receive it. At the moment the Soviet press is in full blast against the proposals for a Western Union. This should surprise no one, in view of the Russian fear that we again intend, as we well might, to rebuild the Ruhr and the Rhineland as a field of production for arma-

ments to be used against Russia. But if the British convince the Russians that it is impossible for us to maintain our own economic position or our independence of America without rebuilding Western Europe; if the plans for doing so on a peace basis are fully explained to the Russians and their co-operation requested (we could with perfect safety offer them a seat on an International Board to develop the Ruhr and the Rhineland as a source of the goods necessary for rebuilding Europe), then I believe we could go ahead with Russian goodwill. Western Europe, dominated by American imperialism and carrying Britain in its sweep, is certainly a reasonable ground for Russian alarm. But an International Authority with which Russia is associated, designed to strengthen Britain financially and so aid her in negotiations with America, is no menace to the Soviet Union. In this, as in everything else, the key to success is to advance proposals publicly only after the fullest and most frank discussion with Russia, which must be given a chance to collaborate freely. At the same time it must be made clear that we are determined in any case to go ahead with plans for world and European reconstruction, even if the U.S.S.R. will not collaborate. If we succeed, as I believe we can, in reaching by these means the basis for joint work on technical and practical issues, there is a good chance that Russia may be prepared for full collaboration in U.N.O.

I take little stock of those who fear that Russia is in any case irreconcilable. Marxist theory has already proved unexpectedly flexible; the Soviet Union is far too weak today to be a military menace to her neighbours, she is absolutely obliged to spend the next ten or twenty years in raising the standard of living of her people and developing her own vast territory. Stalin, today playing from weakness and not from strength, fears isolation and, above all, war in isolation. He still relies on building "socialism in one country," assured that the quarrels of capitalist powers and their incapacity to manage their own economies will in time prove that Socialism works and Capitalism is outdated. Russia's strength lies in the failure of Western capitalism. If we can solve our own economic problems, we have nothing to fear from the Soviet Union. If we cannot solve them, war with the U.S.S.R. would only hasten and complete our own catastrophe.

THE NATURAL MAN AND THE  
POLITICAL MAN

by EDWIN MUIR

THE HISTORY of the modern novel is the history of the disappearance of man as religion and humanism conceived him. Instead, there has emerged a new species of the natural man firmly dovetailed into a biological sequence and a social structure. This new natural man is capable of improvement but, unlike the natural man of religion, has no need for regeneration. He is simply a human model capable of indefinite improvement on the natural plane; the improvement depending ultimately on the progress of society, and of things in general.

Towards the end of last century it was fashionable to call this new natural man 'the thinking animal,' and he has since been called 'the unique animal.' He follows a natural development from birth to death, and since this is all that is allowed him, it is important that he should pass through all its stages—childhood, adolescence, love, maturity—in a manner closely corresponding to the requirements of nature; otherwise he will be 'frustrated' or 'distorted.' His upbringing, his surroundings, his ideas, should be as 'natural' as possible. If they are, the expectation is that he will turn out to be satisfactory.

But in practice it is discovered that he is never quite satisfactory, that some residue of frustration or distortion always remains in him. This residue is taken to be due to the imperfection of our political and social system, and under a perfect constitution it is

assumed that it would disappear. The corollary of the natural man is consequently the political man: the man conscious that something must be done collectively by all natural men, or a majority or an effective minority of them, in order that an opportunity may be given to every natural man to develop his natural potentialities in the most natural way conceivable.

The difference between this new natural man and the natural man of myth and religion and humanism is quite simple. The first natural man was not regarded as human in the complete sense until he put on the spiritual man; he had to be made anew by a process which did not enter into the rest of the biological sequence. This process was conceived symbolically as a re-birth, a spiritual act by which man was integrated into his true image and became conscious of his unique place in the world and in time. We may conceive this new man as being grafted on the natural man, or as being innate in the natural man and seeking to emerge from him into complete humanity. In either case, as the new man can exist only in the body of the old, his co-existence with the old implies a moral struggle in the centre of the individual, a struggle which determines in all sorts of ways his struggle to adapt himself to society or society to himself, but is different in its intimacy, its unavoidability, and its apparent lack of utilitarian causation. This fundamental moral struggle within the individual was for many centuries accepted as the essential character of man. This being suspended between good and evil by a law inherent in his nature is the man of Dante and Shakespeare, and of Balzac and Tolstoy. He occupies a country of his own with unique rights and needs, quite apart from the biological sequence.

During a number of generations the frontiers of that country have been crumbling away. For the separate autonomous drama of mankind we have gradually substituted a natural process. The result has been a reduction of the image of man, who has become simpler, more temporal, more realistic, and more significant.

The difference between man as he was conceived by Christian theology, by Dante, Milton, Pascal, and the tragic poets of England and France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and man as he is understood in different ways by Mr. H. G. Wells, D. H. Lawrence, the early Aldous Huxley, Mr. Ernest Heming-

way, M. Henri de Montherlant, and a great number of popular middle-brow novelists—for the most important point about the new conception is that it has become the popular conception—is difficult to define, though obviously great. One way of expressing it is by saying that to the traditional man the individual's life was a conflict, and that to the modern man it is a development. The conflict has been stated in various terms; but the formulation of it which is closest to our own ways of thinking and most readily understandable by us is that which we find in Milton and Racine: the conflict is a conflict between reason and passion or impulse. This formula was accepted as valid throughout the seventeenth and also a great part of the eighteenth century, though in a somewhat mechanical way; reason and impulse tending to become categories instead of vital principles in the individual.

The Romantic Movement reinstated impulse, but it also did something else; it tended to identify reason with impulse; it substituted for the old conflict a sort of mystical co-operation. France, with its capacity for stating everything rationally, first became conscious of the implications of the new attitude. By a succession of writers from Madame de Staël to George Sand and Alfred de Musset the impulses were declared to be sacred, and more reasonable than reason itself. This phase, strewn with the wrecks of spontaneous love affairs, illustrated by a confused crowd of anonymous Byrons and Chateaubriands, did not last for very long. But it left behind it, in spite of its failure in practice, the assumption that reason and impulse worked in co-operation; and if this was so, there was nothing left for the individual but to develop. This conclusion was merely implicit in the work of the romantics; it was not formulated until much later. It required for its formulation certain theories drawn from Darwin, and particularly the idea of evolution applied to the life of the individual. The old conflict was gone, or was hidden away. Darwin and the orthodox economists taught man the necessity for adaptation; Spencer and the Utopians opened before him the endless possibilities of evolution. The adaptation was a present need; the evolution, a future contingency. But at the same time the adaptation was a changing adaptation, for the environment of man was changing, and therefore to adapt oneself was to evolve. That the evolution might have no moral principle, that the environment of man might

change for the worse instead of for the better, was not at that time seriously considered.

To contemplate man's image of himself changing and catch the stages of the change is almost as difficult as to imagine visually the process by which the countless animal species developed from a few simple prototypes. The idea of man current at any one time is not a homogeneous one; old conceptions linger on; new ones which may prevail later tentatively appear. The idea that man's life is a development, and part of a greater development which is essentially political or sociological, not moral or religious, was bound to lead to the conclusion that this development could be controlled, and that human life could be conditioned to a great extent, given the power and the equipment. To-day we can see this theory being applied on a large scale in several countries. For this theory man becomes a subject who responds in a more or less calculable way to certain things such as encouragement, suggestion, the carefully thought out system which is called propaganda, intimidation, display, rubber truncheons, and in general all the varieties of greed and fear. As man is a creature with a natural development, entirely contained in his environment, all that is needed is to decide the terms within which he shall develop. Once these are settled by a sufficiently powerful group, men can be used with calculable accuracy.

This is a theory which could have been founded only on the new natural man developing within an environment in a calculable way, without any effective inward struggle, or any permanent conception of a desirable life, or any personal striving to realise it. If the theory does admit that such obstacles to its working exist, it regards them as foolish, since they ignore the reality of *things*; such things as the power of the state, tanks, shells, concentration camps, and such things also as the natural man's appetites, vanities, angers, fears and hatreds, which can always be easily aroused, and which, even with a little direction, can become irresistible. Consequently what has gradually been brought into prominence by the religion of development is the primacy of *things*, and it finds its fulfilment in the theory that men can be conditioned by things. Control things and you control mankind. In this conception the moral struggle which possessed the imagination of other ages, and was strong even a century ago, recedes into irrelevance,

and becomes like one of those vestigial organs in the body which no longer perform any useful function, but exist merely to plague us: a sort of vermiform appendix.

It is easy to note the reduction of the image of man in contemporary politics, for there it presents itself in flesh and blood and works out logically in contempt for human freedom and for human life, things which always go together. To see it in contemporary literature is more difficult. Perhaps it may be best seen in a drastic simplicity. In his book *Modernes*, M. Denis Saurat makes the generalisation that in French literature the classical writers of the seventeenth century exalted reason, the Romantics of the nineteenth century emotion, and certain contemporary writers sensation. This generalisation traces the graph of the modern fall of man. It is a descent from complexity to simplicity, from the civilised to the primitive.

An idea of the change in our attitude to human life may be had by comparing any character in Dickens with any character in the early work of Mr. Ernest Hemingway. Dickens was a very emotional writer, but he still knew that there was in the individual a struggle between impulse and reason. He was not a religious writer, but his characters still lived on a plane which was partly spiritual and partly natural. Mr. Hemingway's characters live on the natural plane alone. The two gunmen in his short story, 'The Killers,' are mechanical murderers, and their victim a mechanical murderee; they are all equally conditioned; and there is nothing to be said about them, except that they evoke the kind of pity one might feel in watching some hunting beast pulling down and killing its prey. The whole story is astonishingly natural from one point of view, and astonishingly unnatural from another, for after all the characters are not animals but merely men thinking and feeling and acting in an extraordinarily circumscribed way. The murderers have no remorse; the victim has no feeling except animal resignation. The immediate lust to kill, the immediate dread of being killed, are all that remain. There is nothing but sensation.

Turn from this to Dickens. Jonas Chuzzlewit too is a murderer, but he never suggests to our minds the picture of an animal armed with a gun or a knife; he remains a human being with thoughts and emotions, horrible enough, certainly, yet drawn from the gen-



eral fount of human thought and emotion. In his short story Mr. Hemingway is sure of only one thing, the immediate sensation, and being a scrupulously honest writer, he confines himself to that and leaves out thought and emotion as much as possible. He starts with the natural man following his needs, suffering from his frustrations as a wounded animal might suffer. And starting from that, it was impossible for him to reach the world of emotions and thoughts, for they are a legacy from the traditional man and are determined by beliefs which assume that man is not natural in the same sense as an adder or an ape is natural.

Mr. Hemingway began to write in the years of disillusion which followed the last war, and the natural man he describes is therefore the frustrated natural man. Probably no one else has described more vividly the horror of the natural man's life when he is driven and goaded and denied natural satisfaction, and retires into himself to lick his wounds or seeks forgetfulness in drink or sex. For many years Mr. Hemingway went on describing the frustrated natural man, articulate only in violence or in sensual experience. Then he discovered that the frustrated natural man was not enough, and that he must transcend himself and become the political man. This was the discovery of a whole generation, not of Mr. Hemingway alone; what makes it particularly interesting in his case is that we can see it taking place in his work. He began with the undirected revolt of *Fiesta*; he attained the disciplined revolt of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, with its glorification of the republican struggle in Spain. The man Mr. Hemingway describes in this book is still the natural man, fighting and lusting. He has merely added a few words to his vocabulary; the words liberty, fraternity and equality. They are sufficient in themselves to give him an aim beyond his appetites; but his way to them is still the way of the natural man; and only by fighting and killing can he achieve a world where there will be nothing to hinder his natural development, no obstacle, no frustration. The goal of all men has miraculously risen before him; although he has acknowledged nothing but sensation, three ideas have announced themselves to him; but they are in a different world from his world, and can be reached only in a different way from his way. They can be reached only by thought and emotion and the action which follows from them, while all that he can offer is sensation, a sort

of *appetite* for liberty, equality and fraternity which drives him to batter down all that stands between him and them without knowing that, even if he were to gain them, he could not, as he is, enjoy them. This incompatibility between the natural man and his political aims makes Mr. Hemingway's later work sentimental in a curious way; it is as if we saw Caliban looking for a moment through the eyes of Prospero, and, without Prospero's rod, swearing to perform Prospero's miracle with his naked fists. This sentimentality of violence is implicit in the work of all writers who conceive Utopia as a kingdom to be taken by storm. Mr. Hemingway's first frustrated men were far more real.

The frustrated natural man was a popular, almost a typical, figure in the fiction after the last war, when hope and belief were at their lowest ebb. Some of the writers who wrote about him then have since given him up and turned elsewhere for a more adequate conception of man; Mr. Aldous Huxley, for example. But those who stuck to him and tried to educe something positive from him were finally left with no choice but to turn him into the political man. And when the natural man becomes political, there seem to be only two directions in which he can advance; towards Communism or towards Fascism. The man who thinks of himself developing within an environment, without any deep-rooted resistance, will ultimately prefer that the terms of his development should be laid down unmistakably, so that a clear channel may be provided for his impulses. In following these impulses he knows the only kind of freedom which he can know; and as that freedom seems infinitely dear to him in prospect, he is prepared even to die for it. Communism and Fascism, which both believe in the natural man, provide a channel for his impulses, in the one case a channel which may lead him to live better, in the other a steep road rushing steadily downwards, where he will bury himself entirely in nature in a sort of sacred frenzy. When the inward struggle of the individual is regarded as irrelevant such things as these can be achieved; the one thing which cannot be achieved is liberty.

Communism, by postulating the natural man and using him as he is, with his needs and his desires, tries to teach him; there are transcendental implications in Communism, no matter how carefully communists may rule them out. Fascism is far more radically

involved with the natural man, and rests upon him entirely. It does not look beyond him, but glorifies him, sees in him the sole hope of the future, and regards the spirit, the intellect and the higher uses of the senses merely as diseases marring his natural perfection. The two modern writers who have described the natural man most penetratingly and eloquently, D. H. Lawrence and Henri de Montherlant, are therefore almost of necessity Fascists by implication. They are not pre-eminently political in their attitude. In Lawrence we have a fierce exposure of the squalor of our industrial civilisation, and in Montherlant a contempt for all the shams of the age and a ruthless assertion of the right of the natural man to go his own way. They both criticise society from the point of view of the natural man. Lawrence's criticism of Industrialism is that it frustrates even the simplest natural impulses, and sex in particular, the central impulse: the criticism is valuable because it is fundamental. Against the synthetic monstrosity of modern life he sets the values of blood and soil, the first natural values, essential because natural. But having affirmed them, he turns against what he calls 'the white consciousness,' the bloodless consciousness of the spirit; and whether he does this because it is spirit or because it is diseased spirit it is impossible to say. He preferred the primitive, for he felt that only the primitive, in a world he hated so much, was still sound. He was outraged by the Christian counsel to love your neighbour, and retorted that hate was often more honest and salutary; for hate was an instinctive discharge of energy, and in a world which lived mainly by routine, any instinctive discharge was to him its own justification. He asserted all the impulses of the natural man, love, hatred, anger, cruelty, scorn, and found a mystical meaning in the working of the impulses. He found in them too a sort of mythology, not unlike the mythology which the Nazis have invented, though far less heavy and tedious, since he was a writer of genius. He wanted mankind to start again at the beginning, in a state beyond good and evil, and never reach the Fall. He would have been satisfied if man could be born properly once. The question is whether man can be born properly once, and therefore whether Lawrence's gospel was nothing but a dream. He saw that our senses and impulses were frustrated at every point by the life we live; he wanted a state in which they would function naturally.

without distortion. He saw that such a state would be better than our present one. He believed that this state could be reached by a sort of mystical assertion of the natural man; here again he forestalls the Nazis. But the Nazis themselves have shown to what a belief of this kind leads; to violence, persecution, cruelty, war, and in the last resort, slavery. For the natural man is violent, quarrelsome, greedy, and also, since he has no inner resistance, easily subjugated.

Montherlant's picture of the natural man is more sophisticated. His natural man has attended fashionable parties on the Riviera, and knows all the tricks of the social life. At the same time he has the greatest contempt for society and is by conviction anti-social. He is much more formidable than Lawrence's natural man; for he has examined the life of the spirit and sardonically dismissed it. He scorns the world in which he lives, a world of dupes; but he has no wish to change it; he is content that he himself should live the infinitely preferable life of a very clever, unusually honest, and terrifically vital natural man. He is exclusive; he insists on his privileges. If he has a counterpart in the Fascist movement, it is among the leaders who use the beliefs of the ordinary man for their own purposes, and see through the mythology while exploiting it.

The importance of Lawrence and Montherlant is that they draw with unusual honesty the consequences of a belief in the natural man. These consequences are very different from those which his original sponsors expected. The believers in evolution thought that the natural man contained within himself endless potentialities of improvement; and their faith was ultimately founded on a mystical belief in the necessary tendency of things to go on improving for all time: it was founded on a faith in things. Man had merely to develop; and his development was guaranteed by the beneficial development of things, which was certain. Then it was discovered that man was not a single term in the equation, that some men were fitted to lay down, within the human sphere, the conditions on which man should develop, and that others were fitted only to observe those conditions. For the first was reserved the actual conduct of human policy; for the second, a mythology that would please or inspire them, and make them eager to obey and ready to lay down their lives. Human life thus

became a thing completely contained in an environment, and therefore a thing to which the imagination of the writer could give no ultimate significance, since there was not in it even the pretence of choice, even the day-dream of freedom. If the life of the individual is a development, then that development is simple and inevitable. If the life of the individual is a conflict, then that conflict implies a choice and the choice, complexity, and complexity, the existence of more in human life than can be compressed into a formula. What has taken place in literature is a simplification of the idea of man, connected with this notion of natural process and development. The simplification is a general tendency; literature has not initiated, but merely reflected it; and only those writers who are deeply rooted in tradition, and possessed with the idea of time, have been able to make headway against it; such writers as Proust, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, to confine ourselves to the novelists: there are similar figures in poetry. The obsession of such writers with tradition was called out by this human crisis. But Lawrence, Hemingway and Montherlant are completely in the modern convention. They definitely accept the new leaf which history has turned, the leaf on which the war was written. They themselves write on that leaf, and the first words written on a new leaf, even by genius, are never new but merely primitive, a repetition of words written on the first leaf of all, before civilisation began, with the few precarious modifications which have been wrought since by civilisation on the material fabric of life.

LITERARY CRITICISM  
BOOK REVIEWING

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NEHRU'S DISCOVERY OF INDIA

by H. N. BRAILSFORD

**T**O-DAY WE ARE thinking happily and hopefully of Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Premier of a free India. Incarnated in this man, his country after nearly two centuries of alien rule has recovered the use of her will. But here is a book, fresh from the press, which he wrote in prison and the date below its preface is one of the last days of last year. So quickly has he stepped from impotence to power. I remember vividly my first impressions of him. I was allowed to meet him, many years ago, in the keep of an old Moghul fortress, during one of his earlier imprisonments. I noted his quick step, his athletic frame and the swiftness of his nervous reactions as we talked. This was a man, I felt, whom Nature had designed for adventure and action, though she had given him also a sensitive gift of speech and an artist's delight in the world around him. There may be contemplative scholars who can adapt themselves fairly easily to a prisoner's life, if they have books and paper, but in spite of his love of literature and science Nehru is by temperament rather a fighter and a leader than a student. In prison he turned to history as others have done before him.

It was in the Tower that Raleigh wrote his *History of the World*. Out of the Bastille came Voltaire's historical epic, the *Henriade*. Condorcet was not yet a prisoner behind locked doors when he wrote his *Sketch* of human history, surely the most hopeful book that ever came from a thinker's pen, but he was in close

From THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, Kingsley Martin, Editor  
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confinement, hiding from the Terror in an attic of a friend's house. It is easy to understand why the prisoner makes his escape into history. No locks can bar his way into the past, nor forbid his intercourse with his forerunners. On this vast stage he may act vicariously and listen in his silent cell to the tramp of the legions in whose ranks he once served. In prison Nehru could see no longer the panorama of India's mountains and rivers that he loved. It was only her moons, as he tells us on a moving and beautifully written page, that came and went across his field of vision. Sometimes in the garden where he was allowed to dig, his spade would uncover fragments of her past—once an exquisitely carved lotus, and then the foundations of a disused gallows-tree. And so he set to work consciously and methodically to create for himself out of the stores of memory an image of the Mother-India for whose sake he lay in prison. *The Discovery of India* is not a formal history, though it ranges over the five thousand years that stretch from the prehistoric urban civilisation of the Indus Valley down to the "Quit India" movement of Congress in 1942. Rather is it an attempt to discover the sacred thread of identity that ran through all these centuries and made out of Aryans and Dravidians, Muslims and Hindus in some sense a single people amid the Babel of their differences.

It was to the earlier part of this long record that I found myself turning with the keenest interest, for Nehru has the gift of imaginative divination. The story, first of the Moghul and then of the British Empire, is not difficult to grasp, and here there was nothing unexpected in his narrative. But how did the fusion of Aryan and Dravidian come about? How did the way of life we call Hinduism arise, and why was it stereotyped into a rigid system of caste? Nehru, who wisely tells us little about the rise and fall of ephemeral kingdoms, is chiefly concerned with the growth of Indian cultures and the evolution of social life. If he leaves the reader still in perplexity over many questions which scholars are only beginning to explore, at least he helped me to realise why Indian history is so puzzling to the European mind. He quotes in this connection a talk he had some years ago with Malraux, who was puzzled, as we all are, to account for the total victory of Hinduism over Buddhism. Still, as one travels over India the glories of the Buddhist millennium are there for all to see—the

Voltaire the key to all the history of our Continent. But no Indian Thomas à Becket was ever murdered in some Canterbury beside the Ganges, and no Emperor ever did penance in an Indian Canossa. Nor were there Bartholomew massacres, or Smithfield fires, or wars of religion, or edicts of Nantes. History in India is the record of the working of anonymous and unorganised forces, sometimes at a prince's court, more often in the villages. Nehru offers two answers to Malraux's question. First, Buddhism did not wholly perish: it left some traces behind it—the creed of non-violence and vegetarianism. Secondly, it perished only after it became corrupt—for not only did it take to worshipping the Buddha as a god; it admitted other gods and godlings, less innocent and less admirable. Once it came to a competition in priestcraft and superstition, the Brahmins with their hereditary prestige were bound to win.

So caste came back in a more rigid form than ever before, and with it the Brahminical monopoly of India's intellectual life. More persuasively, because more soberly than any Indian writer I know, Nehru describes what Indian culture attained at its height—its gracious art, its brilliant innovations in mathematics, its literature, its metaphysics, its grammatical scholarship and above all, what most of us forget, its adventures overseas, which carried it as a civilising influence to Java and Cambodia. Why, round about the tenth century of our era, did its vitality begin to wither, first in the North and much later in the South? Nehru dismisses the usual complacent answer, which traces the decay to foreign invasions. These Indians could have resisted, had not the degeneration already begun. It was the restoration of caste that froze the social structure into rigidity, broke Indian contacts with the outer world and checked the spirit of adventure alike in the mental and physical life of this people. Indian civilisation lost its dynamic and will not recover it till caste, with all its fetters and degradations, is a thing of the past.

This big volume is difficult to review, for it is several books bound together. It is busied with much more than the historical origins of Indian culture. It opens with an autobiographical fragment. It contains a full account of the rise of Congress and its development under Gandhi's leadership. It ends with a series of chapters in which Nehru defines in outline his attitude towards



most of the basic problems of our day. This will be for most of his readers the most important section of a book which errs on the side of attempting too much. The man who wrote it in prison was already, after Gandhi, by far the most beloved and popular figure in the India of our time, the model to whom every young Hindu looks up, while even in these days of bitterness the Muslims feel for him a measure of respect and admiration. Here are the ideas that will inspire the policy of India's first premier, at home and abroad. These chapters are the work of a sensitive and reflective mind, steeped in the culture of the West but with its roots deep in India's own soil.

Nehru remains in this book the uncompromising opponent of British Imperialism. He indicts it for the "deliberate part" it played in "creating disruption" among Indians. He traces to it the arrested growth not merely of India's industry, but of her social structure, which could not freely adapt itself to modern conditions while it remained under foreign rule. It perpetuated the influence of groups and institutions which had no vital functions left—notably the feudal princes. Generation after generation, as a *Herrenvolk* "with a God-given right to govern," it subjected "India as a nation and Indians as individuals" to insult and humiliation. And so no solution which rests on "the retention of India as part of the British Empire has the slightest chance of acceptance."

In his outlook for India it is evident that Nehru dreads the conservative force of religion. Of the orthodox Hindu he says bluntly that he is "more concerned with what to eat and what not to eat than with spiritual values. The rules and regulations of the kitchen dominate his social life." Caste he rejects without qualification. For him Socialism means more than a planned society, more even than a democratic collectivism. He insists that it must "aim at equality." Only as incomes tend "towards equalisation" will class distinctions fade out. He insists that "special opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth" must be given to "backward groups"—presumably the aboriginal tribes and the untouchables. Finally, he is for basing the franchise on the village by a method of indirect election—in short, the Soviet system.

Nehru is optimistic over the prospects of a rapid development

of India's economic resources. He argues from the accumulation of vast sterling assets during the war "that planned development under a free National Government would completely change the face of India within a few years." But he means to avoid the perils of a concentration of industry in great towns.

Against Pakistan he states a powerful case, though he does it temperately. I am not sure that he grasps what it chiefly is that Muslims fear—the power of Hindu big business. But that some compromise may be inevitable, he clearly does realise. He ends on a characteristic note. In spite of all the mistakes his generation of Indians may have made, "we have saved ourselves from triviality and an inner shame and cowardice."

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## LOCAL AFFAIRS

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### TRENDS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

by MICHAEL GARETH LLEWELYN

**T**WO FACTORS are affecting the trend of local government in this country. One is the tendency, very marked in recent years, towards centralisation into large units or regions. The other is the swing municipally as well as nationally towards government by political opinion of a party rather than of a community character.

Regionalisation has many arguments for it, mainly of the efficiency type. It is argued that the older units of local government arose in the time when ox-wagons or pack-horses were the fastest modes of travel with merchandise. The parish pump or, more accurately, the parish church was the centre. The parish council, the borough council, and the more vague shire were the units, although the Justices of Assize as established by that almost greatest of English Kings, Henry II, began to bring effective central justice into the localities.

The rise of the great turnpike roads, the canals, the railways, and again the motor roads made it possible for the boundaries of more than one locality to be traversed in the short space of a day and brought a wider consciousness of unity into being. Our penny post (now, alas! two and a half times as much), the telegraph, the telephone and, in the last generation, the aeroplane widened the circle of this consciousness so that for many of the purposes of government the little localities were seen to be 'out of date.'

Coupled with these new developments in communication and transport came higher standards and fresh demands for public

*From THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, Sir John Murray, Editor*  
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services. Water supplies and sanitation, more comprehensive and wide-reaching systems of roads, hospitals and health, poor relief and employment, education and culture, all called for grander conceptions and far-flung plans. The petty rulers of little areas often proved poor cooperators and worse collaborators. 'Joint' committees are notorious for being 'out of joint.' The demand arose for a wider organisation of government which would over-span the lesser local authorities and also link many of the greater into comprehensive regions for certain large-scale purposes.

As examples, quite recently the old *ad hoc* 'Poor Law Unions' have come under Public Assistance Committees of the County Councils and the Poor Rate municipalised. Education, once the concern of parish managers, became afterwards the responsibility mainly of area School Boards, then of the Boroughs and the Counties and now, under the Education Act of 1944, the responsibility ultimately of the Counties alone.<sup>1</sup> Then we have the movements for wider units of police organisation and the town fire brigades became merged during the war into the National Fire Service. There was a similar movement in respect of the police. *Ad hoc* bodies to deal with regional sewerage schemes, with water supplies, with planning, are a common feature of our public life, while our electricity services are fast moving towards control by a Central Electricity Board. The tendencies are obvious. The old systems of local government are disappearing like snow in the sun. Is this a matter for self-congratulation or self-examination?

It must be said that 'parish pump politics' have 'asked for it' to a large extent. Little men seem seldom able to think in large dimensions. That very quality of knowledge and concern for local detail tends to unfit the 'local' councillor for the big ideas. It is notorious that more time is often given in a council meeting to an expense voucher of some official or member, or to the purchase of a trifle worth a few pounds, than upon the expenditure of scores of thousands of pounds on some great scheme. It seems as if the average councillor, once he is past a domestic scale of expenditure, is incapable of thought or at least of critical thought and understanding.

The experience of an education officer who was concerned with the planning and provision of a much needed secondary

<sup>1</sup> Counties is held to include County Boroughs

school, the cost of the site and building of which meant a major slice out of a hundred thousand pounds, will bear out this point. When a councillor who had debated with vigour (and some prejudice) against the purchase of a few pieces of pottery for an art room saw this great school building going up, his eyes opened wide with surprise. Then he said, 'If I had known that I was voting for this, I should have voted against it.'

It seems as if our system of public education did not keep in step with the demands of the age. Citizenship is still the worst taught subject in our schools. Perhaps it cannot be 'taught,' only 'lived.'

Thus we have on the one hand the demands of a new age being forced upon mentalities schooled largely only in the old. It is widely true that councils with 'shopkeeper' mentalities would not, perhaps could not, think in terms of the new and greater dimensions. There were seldom advocates in the little councils who could explain the advantages to the community of long-term schemes when to most of them the short-term expense was so obvious. There has been insufficient demonstration in local government of the asset side of the account. The annual budget has usually been regarded as expenditure only, and returns other than purely monetary returns have received little consideration at the parish pump.

Yet when we consider that the annual expenditure on tobacco is in excess of expenditure on local government we begin to see how first things have not been put first and that the public services have been thought of more as excrescences upon our lives rather than as the very stuff of life, as in fact they are.

Our small units of local government are to a large degree losing their powers and influence by default. The ability to co-operate within the restricted boundaries of a parish or a borough did not sufficiently bring into being, when the need came, wider approaches to municipal government. Examples can be quoted of fire brigades which, seeing a glow in the sky, went to attend to the fire but stopped at their town boundary when they found that the blaze was in another district. The restriction in the range of municipal ambulances to the district owning them is another instance of the same localised control of what ought to be a service that knows no boundaries. It may indeed be the fact

that full cooperation between adjoining municipal districts would have, anyhow, been impossible. The truth remains that big needs call for big organisations. The trend is there and is perhaps inevitable.

Yet in all this there is some of the character of totalitarianism. Already in the 'Divisional Executives' established by the counties under the Education Act of 1944 to deal in local divisions with the educational set-up can be heard the grumble, 'What is the use of us meeting here when what we decide is turned down by the county?' The county may be right or wrong—probably is more often right than wrong—yet this spirit is not good for local government and the tendency will be for the local bodies nominated under county schemes to become either 'rubber stamp' committees or a group of inveterate grumblers. In the former case the officials serving the local group find their work speeded and, inevitably, their power (which is usually for the good) increased. In the latter case they may be ground between the upper millstone of local exacerbation and the lower millstone of county discipline. In such conditions no official can do his best work.

It is inescapable that larger units have to function in order to deal with greater things, with problems not only of deeper complexity, but also inherently of wider geographical implications than were the affairs of a century ago.

Need there have been this breakdown of age-old traditions of local government (partial, perhaps) in order to achieve efficient and wider organisations? It is suggested that there need not. We have been too much influenced by the standing of the shire in our past history so that we have forgotten the more fundamental small locality wherein lie the roots of our conception and indeed of most of our experience of local government. Instead of starting with the later shire and working downwards to the localities, our modern structure of local government should have begun with the localities and built the shire upon them and of them. Our counties should be divided into their natural regions or districts, usually centred around a market or manufacturing or residential town, nodal to the means of communication, and each district should have its council as at present, but with this difference: that each local council, on a collegiate principle, elects repre-

sentatives in proportion to its size and rateable value to form the county council. Similarly, for larger regions than the shires, bodies set up for the control of services which demand a wider area, such as water supplies, roads, further education, electricity, and so forth, could be appointed on the collegiate principle from the county (and county borough) councils. In all cases the cooptation of experts or persons having special knowledge or experience of any service ought to be part of the system at least to serve on the specialised committees, although there is no reason why they should not be full members of the councils as well, so long as they are few in number in comparison with the whole body.

Parenthetically, this matter of the cooptation of people with specialised knowledge tends to be neglected or deliberately ignored, as far as the law permits it, by some bodies more conscious of their duty to a particular political party than to the public as a whole. But more of that anon.

We can therefore visualise a representative system of local government wherein all the bodies concerned are interlocked and build up into a pyramid in which all the parts are not only responsible, but also responsible to each other. The policy of the higher body, though it would often be in conflict with that of a particular locality, would nevertheless be felt to represent more truly the joint opinion of the constituent bodies forming the higher council. This realisation would undoubtedly make for a greater sense of reality in the work of bodies to which now so many duties are delegated 'on the string' but in the real evolution and control of which the local bodies have really very little effective say.

It will be argued that to have a completely separate election for the county council safeguards something intangible in the freedom of the citizen. In practice, this is seldom true in these days of political groupings even in local government. It is probable that the collegiate method of electing county councils actually would change their personnel very little. It would reduce the number of elections of which one good one is better than a number of small ones. Yet there would result a greater sense of oneness in the whole system, which would be invaluable in its actual working. So much friction and frustration is apparent in the functions of a body that only has powers delegated from above

rather than when it would operate a policy for which it has had a statutory place in framing. This point may appear to the man in the street a mere quibble, but it is of real moment in the smooth working of wider policies by the narrower body. When people began to say, 'What is the use of us coming here?' that is the beginning of either indifference or of exasperation.

There is one matter of great importance in the work of professional officials in relation to committees and this is that too often the officials are committee-ridden. By this is not meant that the officials should be free to operate policies of their own; that would manifestly be contrary to all democratic traditions. What is meant is too much control in detail or rather too much tendency to use the official for personal stunts or to work him hard on things of transitory or petty importance which at the moment catch the public eye. The experts are not given enough time to think nor enough leisure to let their ideas crystallise into sound schemes.

The committee system can in this respect become a danger to the most efficient government. Too often upon it are self-satisfied people, or people who have made no particular success in their own lives, who seem always to be thinking up things for the official to do. These directions often follow each other in bewildering frequency and, while they may have some value in the scheme of things, they will always become 'test cases' as regards that particular official and that particular councillor.

The advice of a cynical old town clerk to his successor once was:

I wish you luck, my boy. If you see that your Minutes are correct, the letters written, and the reports drafted you will get on all right. But woe betide you if your paper work is not spot perfect. If it is, you can let the town go hang.

There is much truth in that cynical remark. Committees will usually forgive lack of vision, of ideas, of enterprise if the paper work measures up to the Minutes. Yet, expert officials should be providing plans, having leisure to think, making researches, exchanging ideas with their colleagues all over the country, seeing successful schemes in action; in short, providing the technical and professional brains to the whole organisation. This they cannot



always sufficiently do because of the plethora of pen driving which they have to do and because of the pettiness of some committees who so often scrutinise an expense voucher with the jealous eye of a mean shopkeeper.

When this point was put to an experienced borough engineer he replied:

There's a lot in it. Too many of our big schemes do not get enough thought given to them and they are less efficient and more costly because of that. I got my best idea once when playing golf and it saved the town thousands of pounds. But all I received was a reprimand that I had absented myself from my office that day!

At one borough some years before the war a municipal expert called in to advise on the improvement of its public efficiency horrified the councillors by advocating greater freedom of action for chief officials, making them what he called 'non-working officers.' What he meant was that it would pay the town to give its experts time to think and relieve them of pushing pens and getting themselves right on points of trivial detail for the next committee. That work, said this very wise adviser, was for a deputy and that meant more professional and expert staff. He maintained that, alternately, the additional cost would be saved in efficiency in the larger things.

This point of view is difficult to popularise with some councillors who often regard technical and professional work as something which is done between four walls and between nine o'clock in the morning and five o'clock in the evening. Many public representatives leave their counters, their lathes, or their calls at houses, and feel their work is done. Too often this makes them incapable of appreciating the quality and especially the character of intellectual planning. The detail escapes them, they see only the final result—often hurried and scamped because the professional expert has been swamped, in addition, with attention to trivialities in order that he may face a committee, some of them carping and uncomprehending critics, with a clean sheet. This may be in many cases a harsh estimate of things, yet this situation is commoner than many people realise. It is likely with new types being elected to public bodies that the standard of good manners in committees is falling and that people incapable of judging

fairly the work of an expert air their views with pontifical wisdom.

One doctor holding a Diploma in Public Health, finding himself overworked in his private practice during the war, accepted an appointment as a Borough Medical Officer of Health. A few years later a colleague asked him how he liked the public service. His answer was terse:

'It's lousy. They all know more about public health than I do.'

That is probably an extreme case, yet largely symptomatic. So many views expressed on public bodies are doctrinaire rather than objective, expressive of a compensation for that old 'inferiority complex' in members of humble origin and too conscious of party loyalties than of the weal public in its fullest, widest and most human sense.

That brings us to the political character which local government is assuming with rapidity. The great political parties, appropriate for Parliament, are now repeated in our local governing bodies. This is a pity, for of all forms of government, local government is the most closely in touch with the everyday man, and its keynote should be people, not party.

At a recent election a certain party obtained complete control of the local council, and one member of this majority had the temerity to say in public that minorities had no rights whatsoever. This theory produced no indignant reactions from his colleagues who had arrived there precisely because minorities in our history had demanded and secured rights to exist and rights to speak and live as minorities. The logical end of the denial of rights to minorities is in the last resort the concentration camp, which, however, British public opinion would be sensible enough to avoid. British humour and sense of fair play could save us from that ultimate folly and send out neck and crop into the wilderness any party, however popular, which began seriously to head in that direction.

The party system in local government has given rise to the caucus wherein, in more than one of the parties, decisions on a strictly party basis are taken so that the business on the committees and on the public council becomes, on policy, cut and dried if that party carries a working majority. The reports of officials, if these are objective and cut across the party policy,

may be gently or vociferously set aside. The party policy is what matters. Opposing views are not considered.

This would not be so bad if some people elected on public bodies were not so insufferably smug and self-righteous about their opinions. Honest doubt, as well as confession, is good for the soul. 'By the bowels of Christ,' exclaimed Cromwell, 'think it that you may be mistaken.' And the humbler the origin of the member the more obstinately as a rule does he cling to the opinion supplied to him cut and dried by the caucus.

As an example of caucus interference in public administration, a local government official<sup>2</sup> some years ago was requested by the caucus of the party then in power in the public body for which he worked to submit drafts of all his reports on matters of policy to them before they came before his committees. This savoured so much of 'Gestapo' methods that the request was ignored, not in so many words (as that was not politic) but by a masterly inactivity in the matter.

A further point to remember is that chairmen often tend, in the nature of things, to become dictators, ranging in type from the mild to the impossible. They are often men of great force of character and ability and they must be called upon to give provisional decisions of importance between the various meetings in order that local government shall function smoothly. Yet this very necessary duty can in some instances produce a non-democratic result. It needs men of very high personal and social sensitiveness to be able not to assume an omniscience when they have exercised this very necessary right too long and with too complacent a committee.

Chairmen should change at least every three years. There is, it is true, a great administrative advantage in having a chairman of experience who is, by his service, well informed. Nevertheless, longer service in the chair than three years tends to make the chairman, unconsciously perhaps, feel 'not as other men are' and to become, not an unbiased arbitrator between various opinions in his committee, but a sledge hammer upon all who take an opposite view from his own. He tends to become a 'leader' rather than an impartial chairman.

<sup>2</sup> The same official was offered privately a substantial increase in salary if he did not press for a big scheme that would mean an appreciable increase in the local rates.

In the Brains Trust the question was asked why in proportion so few academical and technical experts interested themselves as representatives of the people on local governing bodies. It is probable that the educational system in this country does not put back into local government, nor even into Parliament, the competent and informed professional scholars and experts that it should. This is not to be snobbish. It is merely common sense that the best brains should be deeply concerned with the best government. It may be a matter of great satisfaction to a party that it is represented by a majority of men 'who started work at twelve' or whatever the fashionable age is now; yet, though this is to the individual credit of these men, the objective view must be that if education is worth what it is represented to be by all parties we ought, in the majority of instances at least, to have men of the highest education in control of our destinies local and national.

This article is not to say that 'there is something rotten in the state of Denmark.' In spite of many failings, British local government is the least corrupt and the most efficient in the world. The plea of the writer is that certain tendencies of a totalitarian nature (whether emanating from left movements or right) should be nipped in the bud now and the British tradition of free discussion, man to man, not politician to politician, saved on our councils of local government.

Perhaps the present Government with its mandate from a majority of the people will realise that it has been given this mandate, not so much on political grounds but on human grounds. Now that the struggle for existence as a party is over, at any rate for a time, perhaps the new Government in power will feel itself custodian not of a doctrine but of a people unsurpassed in their devotion to freedom. The majority vote does not mean that minorities have to be stamped out in their human expression. Each person must, as in the law, rank equal, whatever his opinion, in the counsels also of the nation.

While there must be a party organisation to win the power, good government will come when the power is used not for the majority good so much as for the common good. Privilege and oppression, intolerance and avarice, selfishness and self-esteem are prerogatives of no particular political party. They are equally objectionable from wherever they come.

Having won a war against totalitarianism we must search our hearts that nothing savouring of it arises in this country. We must not exchange one oppression for another. Now is the time for all good men and true to come to the aid of—not the party—but the people.

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## METAPHYSICS

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### THE RELIGION OF TOMORROW

by LAWRENCE HYDE

**R**EGARDING the central and fundamental element in religious experience little need be said here. Whatever the differences between sects and schools, they all agree in recognizing that the key to emancipation from bondage to the material world lies in a process which can best be described as realization, whereby the life of the individual becomes transformed by the power of the great I AM within his soul.

We are here in a realm in which all our ordinary conceptions fail us. All we can say of Spirit is that, itself beyond all description, it is known only by the effects which it produces. It is the Inner Pole, the great invisible Hub around which all revolves, the overshadowing Presence, the Essence which guarantees the harmonious accomplishing of all external processes. Although its nature cannot be grasped by the operations of the mind, it can be known by the heart. It is revealed inwardly to human beings in terms of peace and a sense of the Whole; outwardly through the senses in terms of cosmic order. And only out of its depths can the true forms and rhythms of the universe be perceived. Nothing is real in the outer world which does not correspond to its nature. Yet that nature remains itself a Mystery.

Nevertheless, we are so constituted that it lies within our power to place ourselves mystically within the sphere of this supreme Life. But this process entails a thoroughgoing process of preparation. No deep metaphysical realizations can become really built

*From ISIS AND OSIRIS*

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into the soul without a long period of aspiration, patience and discipline. Just as it requires many years of training before the philosopher can move with security in a world of intellectual abstractions, the artist learn to identify forms and rhythms which are at first too evasive to be detected, or the scientist become capable of collecting and weighing evidence with absolute scrupulousness, so is it with the expert in the things of the spirit. There are certain facts about our relation to the Divine which after a long and painful period of seeking a man recognizes in his soul to be true. But once realized, they are a secure possession of which he cannot lightly be deprived.

And it may fairly be said also that the training to which the spiritual seeker is called upon to subject himself is the most arduous of all. For all other specialists are to a greater or a lesser degree concerned with data which lie within the sphere of our normal experience; it is a question in every case of taking the knowledge possessed by ordinary people and giving it a more precise and refined character. The extraordinary difficulty of acquiring authentic metaphysical knowledge, however, lies in the fact that it discloses itself only to the degree that the world of our accustomed knowledge has been transcended. We are concerned with a realm of being which, as it were, occupies the interstices between the units with which our ordinary consciousness is making its computations. And our contact with this sphere is likely for a long period to be extremely intermittent and uncertain. We are concerned with experiences which can be acquired only when the mind is not simply in a state of exceptional peace, lucidity and elevation, but also turned in an unfamiliar direction—with the corollary that such insights can be fully recaptured only when the consciousness is again momentarily raised to the same high plane.

This is true, of course, of all superior realizations; but it is consummately true of our more purely mystical apprehensions. And, further, we have to reckon with an element which is far less in evidence, if at all, in other branches of knowledge: the fact that for a long preparatory period at least any real penetration into the sphere of spiritual reality produces a powerful negative reaction, casting the mind helplessly back into a condition of dejection, scepticism or materialism, so that in extreme cases it is

even impelled to repudiate the very spiritual quest on which it originally so hopefully set forth.

As for the pilgrimage itself, it consists of a slow process of emancipation from what, in the light of higher experience, proves to be nothing else but a waking dream.

Our minds, in their lower aspect, are limited by conceptions and sympathies which are derived, in the last analysis, from the character of our bodies. As a result, we are at the mercy of the phenomenal. We think, on this external plane, in terms of change, separateness, physical space and time, while emotionally our responses are largely determined by magnetic attractions and repulsions which are ultimately biological in their origin. Hence all the restlessness, conflict, misery, and helplessness which afflict the individual who identifies himself with his sensational nature.

At the same time we have to recognize, if we are at all awakened, that in the depths of our being, we are associated with that Reality of which we have only a very incomplete and confused realization when in our more habitual and superficial states of consciousness. Our accustomed awareness represents only a strange, restricted and oppressive limitation of a much wider and far more glorious type of apprehension which is our natural heritage.

Within us all an Absolute is unremittingly exercising its influence in transforming and elevating a conditional consciousness. There is something in the deepest centre of our personality which is incessantly engaged in destroying, radically and inexorably, yet in the sublime interests of our liberation, every type of limiting conception, response or satisfaction, on which our unregenerated personality is nourishing itself. Whether we think of it as an emanation of the Eternal, the *Atman*, the Oversoul, a spark from the Central Fire, or the activity of the Mighty I AM within us is—at the outset, at least—of little moment. What alone is of importance is that we should not identify it with that bare implicit “I” which we recognize as being present in all our mental processes and which retreats before us in an infinite regress if we attempt to seize its character. What we are concerned with is a source of creative life. And the more we listen to its intonations the nearer do we come to enjoying that release for which we are all yearning in our hearts. For this basic Principle is centred in all



men equally, however much they may vary in attuning themselves to it; and that towards which it impels us is necessarily in the most exact consonance with that towards which it impels all others, however outwardly incompatible, alien or irreconcilable their activities may be. For it is the voice of the Whole, of the Self of all seemingly separated selves.

The individual who has even to a limited degree come into association with this Absolute Consciousness discovers that he has no real life except in so far as he is some way or other harmonizing himself with the great creative forces of the universe. And the more he does so, the less real do his personal possessions, whether material or psychological, become for him. Hence when the final point of realization is attained he finds that he has nothing left which he can claim as distinctively and creatively his own except his cosmic function as a centre of consciousness which is endowed with the capacity for assimilating, organizing and expressing experience in a unique and responsible fashion.

In so far as he gives himself up to this activity he knows freedom and serenity, whatever the external stresses and strains to which he is subjected. In so far as he attempts to repudiate it and relapses into the undifferentiated or the egocentric he suffers, and loses virtue. The most that is open to him is to maintain himself as a discriminating instrument of the creative power which is working upon him and which, since it is spiritual, enhances instead of obliterating his personality. He becomes as nothing, but only thereby to become all.

Up to this point the issues have been relatively straightforward. We have been engaged only with principles which, as I have already indicated, are recognized by all serious religious schools. The real difficulties begin when we attempt to consider the significance of this sublime and formidable undertaking of achieving transcendental realization when it is translated to the plane of the objective and the concrete—and particularly when the problem is worked out in the terms of our modern consciousness.

One must recognize at the outset that in respect of this great enterprise the intellectuals are not likely to be of much assistance to us. For experience shows that it is just at this point that they most seriously break down. In relation to the past they display,

as we all know, a quite astonishing capacity for conducting elaborate, and often extremely efficient, autopsies upon theories and attitudes by which they have previously been misled. In relation to the present they are prone to complicate the situation by calling for excessively precise definitions and formulations, when their intuitions should properly take them directly to the heart of the problem under discussion. And in relation to the future—with which we are here concerned—they have a propensity towards indicating in prophetic phrases the general line of advance which is to be followed, but without any clear notion of what exactly their proposals imply.<sup>1</sup>

One finds that the literature dealing with the general nature of spiritual values has of late years been steadily increasing in volume. But only in exceptional cases does one meet with writers who have made any serious attempt to consider exactly *how* this higher type of consciousness is to be brought into manifestation, and the extent to which this entails a break with traditional assumptions and practices. And yet when all the rhetoric and eloquence has done its necessary work upon our souls, this is the only real task before us. We have all of us by now, if we have any imagination, a pretty clear notion of what is implied by the spiritual way of life. But we are by no means equally clear regarding the conditions which have to be fulfilled in the present age to make it a reality. While those people who have the clearest vision in this respect would seem—since the note which they strike is usually much more inspirational than intellectual—to be the least capable of dealing with the situation in terms of systematic thought.

First of all, I take it for granted that the modern seeker after spiritual truth, however revolutionary his outlook, will in all sorts of respects find himself obliged to acknowledge the great classical insights and attitudes of religion. There can be no such thing as an abrupt and unqualified repudiation of the past; the new must grow organically out of the old. And this means that what may

<sup>1</sup> "Many advocates of change," says Herbert Morrison, "devote nine-tenths of their speeches to attacking the existing system, and what they say has often an awful lot in it. But they only have a tenth of their time to spare for explaining what they would do."

be described as the general texture of the religious life must essentially remain the same for us; for our relation to eternal values cannot be substantially unchanged at whatever point in time and space we are located. The grand basic elements in the spiritual life—faith, “works,” aspiration, prayer, purification, regeneration, communion with the Unseen—will remain the same for us for ever. But we shall be impelled to give expression to them in the light of our twentieth-century awareness.

The specific demands of the present spiritual dispensation must be unflinchingly met. To what does this commit us?

To begin with, religion, if it is to have any real potency in our modern life, must be before everything *dynamic*. We must achieve a concentrated form of inwardness sufficiently powerful to compensate for the tremendous activity which is being developed by the present generation on the more superficial levels of existence. Only if the hub is securely fixed can we hope to control the dizzy motion of the rim. The swift movement at the periphery must be balanced by a powerful intensity at the centre. We are evidently in a situation in which the traditional, pietistic and conventional modes of religious life are no longer adequate to our needs.

The gentle diffusion of spiritual influences through the forms of nature and the creations of the poets, the mellow observances and the hallowed liturgies which we associate with the faith of our fathers—these things must be preserved, for they are fundamental elements in our relation to the Invisible. Yet there is surely no real future for religion in this era unless it can provide us with a far more immediate and living contact with the unseen realms of being than that which we owe to orthodoxy. Both in the psychological and in the cosmic realm we must truly spiritualize our experience.

To consider first the subjective aspect of this revolution, I would suggest that it will lead to a movement—already discernible among many pioneers away from what we are accustomed to think of as “religious experience”—all that complex of emotions and attitudes fostered by traditionalism—towards what may be described as “disciplined realization.” By this I mean that the whole enterprise of spiritual self-discovery will be conducted in a more cool, scientific and deliberate fashion, appropriate to

the highly conscious nature of our modern approach to experience. The aim of the spiritual director of the future will be to aid the aspirant (formerly described as the "sinner") to build up in a responsible and intelligent fashion a centre within his own being from which he can effectively control his personality, and to do this by the wise application of cosmic principles to his particular case.

The days of preaching, sermonizing, emotional appeals, simple pastoral guidance, conventionalized devotion and piety are obviously behind us. It is a question, rather, of learning to bring our heightened modern awareness to bear upon the supreme problem of all: that of mastering our organisms on the spiritual plane. In respect to all our religious problems we must move forward in a clearer and more electric atmosphere than that which prevails in the sanctuaries of tradition. The authority in this field is now unmistakably passing to those who are looking forward to spiritual science and not backward to tradition, to those whose attitude is experimental and liberal, and whose researches in the religious realm are organic with those which they are undertaking in all others.

As to the content of our future knowledge in this field, there will be no need to emphasize the fact that the heart of all our realizations and endeavours as far as the spiritual path is concerned will be mystical realization—the key to all external adaptations. Nor can there be any question of the coming religion being anything but universal in its range and content. Nothing less than a really comprehensive philosophy can satisfy us in this sphere, a philosophy which has not been developed merely defensively in order to serve the narrow purposes of this or that religious organization, but which is based upon a scientific, inspirational and really tolerant attitude to religious experience. For it is evidently the mark of our present epoch that no partial or one-sided attitude, scheme or mode of activity can any longer be of real assistance to us; on all levels, that of religion included, we must admit our unqualified interdependence, open up our souls to the Whole, and then courageously follow up all the possibilities which present themselves to us as a result.

Another element in our modern religious adventure which is of fundamental significance is the emphasis which will be laid upon

“works.” Men and women will develop their spiritual powers before everything by positive action. Whereas in former ages the religious soul was only too often excessively concerned with his doctrinal position or his agonized personal relation to his God or his Saviour, the seeker after righteousness today will work out his salvation in terms of practical activity. Religiosity will be replaced by realistic and unpretentious labour for others under a spiritual inspiration. Further, such work will be essentially co-operative, that of the community or group, which is the basic unit of the coming dispensation. Those people who are really dedicated to the spiritual life will be recognized by the fact that they are really willing to submit to the discipline of corporate enterprise in the cause of service.

Of cardinal importance finally is the fact that psychological adjustment is by no means the same thing as religious realization. There are many today in the West who are seeking to equilibrate the forces in their being by various techniques of meditation and *yoga*. And in doing so they usually concentrate their minds upon an absolute Centre which they conceive of as the controlling principle of manifestation. But although such contemplation is legitimate enough so far as it goes, one must on no account lose sight of the fact that man’s emancipation from illusion will never be achieved unless he is prepared to respect, not only metaphysical ultimates, but also the grand and infinitely intricate structure of the spiritual cosmos.

What this means essentially is that we must show a full appreciation of the significance of cosmology in its widest sense. We must attune ourselves not only to the transcendental, but also to the immanent God. Nor in this matter can we be satisfied with the attitude of the more conventional nature mystic for whom the visible world is the radiant “garment of God.” For although such insights are of spiritual importance they do not in the end take us very far. It is true that in the light of such vision the external world is transfigured and transformed. But the process is too general to be really *intelligible*. As long as we are concerned in this fashion with only a diffused manifestation of an indwelling Life to which we are reacting primarily emotionally, we still remain essentially uninitiated. Such realizations can only be considered as the first step towards concern with that true tran-

scendental science which provides us with a comprehensive and inspiring picture of the symbology and structure of the great invisible universe.

What it comes to is that a religious philosophy which recognizes the Divine in its transcendental aspect, together with its expression in the world of the senses, but which yet allows for no living association for man with the vast supersensible realm which lies between these two extremes of being is inadequate to our modern spiritual needs. Man will never extricate himself from his spiritual difficulties by mysticism and psychology alone. His redemption will depend also upon his gaining a true knowledge of the laws and processes of the great invisible world by which he is surrounded. And this development, it must be emphasized, is perfectly normal and healthy. For when an individual's spiritual awareness reaches a certain degree of intensity he cannot but pass beyond this stage and awaken to the realities of the Unseen. The more responsive we are to Spirit, the less are our communications with all other forms of life impeded by the dense, insulating medium of matter. In the realm of the Innermost all are one; and this fact is reflected not only in the stimulation within us of those "supernormal" perceptions which enable us to transcend space and time and to convert external into internal association.

Of radical importance also is the fact that this extension of our consciousness is not simply a matter of acquiring supersensible knowledge and a wider cosmic perspective. There is involved also the principle of living association with multitudes of human beings who have passed beyond the Veil and who are devoting their liberated energies to aiding us in our efforts to rise above material conditions. If once we close our minds to the Unseen we are lost. Our regeneration depends to an extreme degree upon our ability to enter into a creative communion with those in the inner spheres of being who have gone ahead of us along the Way.

And in respect to this issue the degree of culture possessed by the individual is a factor of relatively small importance. For the kind of sensibility which is developed by the more refined and sophisticated amongst us, although it enables them to identify and discriminate between all the numberless manifestations of spiritual reality with which nature and art provide us, yet leaves them largely impotent in respect of their personal relation to the

Invisible. We cannot be radically sustained by the contemplation of wisdom and beauty; our salvation depends primarily upon opening the soul inwardly to the regenerative forces which are accessible to us within. Only the most direct form of association with the life behind the Veil—available both to the simple and the learned on the same terms—will fundamentally enable the individual to harmonize the discordant forces in his being. Sophistication, on the contrary, merely complicates and refines, without radically changing, the mode in which the individual's basic attitude, illuminated or otherwise, finds expression in action and thought. Malice, compassion, melancholy, charity, scepticism, generosity, sensuality, egoism—all these qualities manifest just as they did before, with the difference only that art, scholarship and philosophy are called into the service of making them manifest. But all this can leave the soul still unawakened to that experience on which all else depends: that of living communion with the Unseen.

The innermost key to ascension is not knowledge but love. Heaven must be wedded to earth through a living and consciously maintained flow of sympathy between the discarnate and the incarnate members of the human race. The world will be transformed, not primarily by efforts in the direction of social reform, but by our drawing upon the vast reservoir of love, wisdom and power which is accessible to us through the medium of communion with the interior realms of being. Salvation will reach us essentially from the great world of light and life within.

This, it may be remarked, involves very much more than spiritualism as it is ordinarily understood—the Summerland without the higher dedications and disciplines—and leads us in fact to the exalted doctrine of Angel Communion. But this is a theme with which I cannot deal in these pages.

In conclusion I would record my personal belief that we are witnessing today the initial stage—confusing enough to the unimaginative observer, but intelligible to those who have the eyes to see—of the emergence of a new form of religion in which insights of this order will be given full scope for expression. It will be largely independent of traditional revelations. It will be at once deeply mystical in its interior orientation and strictly realistic with respect to objective facts. It will emphasize equally the claims of action

and quietism, respect both the practical vision of the West and the contemplative wisdom of the East. Its priests and philosophers will do full justice both to the extensive and the intensive aspects of the universe. Those who respond to its inspiration will have a living belief in, and develop an intimate intercourse with, the great Unseen, both in its personal and its cosmic aspects. And above all, it will be a universal faith, in which full recognition is given to the diverse modes in which men of all nations and races experience the Divine.

We are here surveying a process of development which plainly can be accomplished only in the course of long centuries. But it is no less evident that the hour has struck at which we should begin to throw off the bondage of the past and turn our eyes in faith and hope towards the Light which is unmistakably breaking on the horizon, bringing with it at last the promise of RENAISSANCE.



## MUSIC

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### POPULAR TASTE IN MUSIC

by SPIKE HUGHES

**I** DOUBT if there can yet be any very scientific approach to the question of popular taste in music. In the first place, who are 'the people'? The musical public? The Man in the Street?

If Tschaikovsky is a 'popular' composer, then so is Irving Berlin; and yet, if we were to take a house-to-house vote throughout the country, we might well find that the majority of questionees had never heard a tune by either and preferred dog-racing.

The most obvious course seems to me to analyse and survey the likes and dislikes of those who are 'interested in that sort of thing.' Unfortunately, there is no Music Manufacturers' Association; there is no accurate way of checking how many people like what kind of music. If we study the sales of gramophone records and sheet-music we learn only the tastes of those who have gramophones or pianos. Least of all can we ever learn *why* one kind of music may be more popular than another. In short, there is no way of measuring the popularity of music. The would-be analyst and measure-upper can do no more than cock a rather cynical eye around him, study the concert announcements and the *Radio Times* and keep an ear open whenever an errand boy approaches on his bicycle.

When I asked the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) to let me have some idea of the proportion of listeners who preferred one kind of music to another I was given these figures:

*From PILOT PAPERS, Charles Madge, Editor*  
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Of a hundred listeners questioned	4	liked chamber music;
	11	liked symphony concerts;
	19	liked dance music;
	24	liked cinema organs;
	29	liked brass bands.

What is revealing and, I think, not entirely without interest, is the B.B.C.'s complete disregard of its own research into listeners' preferences. In a typical week in the Home Service there were 23 hours 30 minutes of orchestral and chamber music ('live' and recorded) against only 11 hours 25 minutes of dance music. 'Light music,' including cinema organs, brass bands, theatre orchestras, salon quintets, etc., totalled 13 hours 55 minutes—of which exactly 30 minutes were taken up by brass band music. Which means that if the figures given above are at all reliable the majority public is provided with less of what it wants than any other section of the music-listening community.

Without querying the accuracy and good intentions of the B.B.C.'s findings in Listener Research, it is obvious, however, that they do not fairly reflect the musical taste of the country. As far as any music may be said to be 'popular' in the sense that it is enjoyed by the people (as distinct from being created by the people), then, with or without reluctance, we must accept the rather grim fact that the popular music of today is that which is lumped together under the general heading of 'Dance Music.'

*'It may not be good, but it's commercial . . .'*

The term Dance Music is used here to denote the kind of music known in Charing Cross Road as 'commercial,' the playing and singing of 'pop' numbers as opposed to the cult of 'jazz' and its modern development, 'swing.'

Perhaps the most striking thing about modern popular dance music is that in an Age of Progress it has lasted so long. During more than thirty years it has changed only superficially; we find the same rigid conformity to melodic, harmonic and rhythmic pattern prevailing today that prevailed before 1914. In a musical sense modern dance music suffers from arrested development, and the future historian will be able to find no musical evidence to show that the hit of 1946 was not written in 1913, and vice versa. Indeed, on musical evidence alone the historian would

probably place the modern popular song as dating from the early 1800's, certainly many years before Debussy's earliest works were written. (Play Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un faune* to the average 'commercial,' 'jazz' or 'swing' musician and he will consider its 1892 harmonies 'screwy' and almost wickedly 'modern.' The explanation of this conservatism is partly technical and one which we might examine later on.)

Equally striking is the fact that while dance music has lasted so long in its present form its popularity with the masses grows with its dissemination. By rights the gramophone, the radio and the talking film should have killed it long ago; but while mechanical reproduction on a world-wide scale has shortened the life of the popular tune, it has succeeded in creating a demand for more of the same sort of thing.

At one point it looked for a moment as if the West Indian rumba might introduce a little overdue cross-breeding, but it proved to be almost as much of a mule as the fox-trot itself.

The exotic in music has been known to become fashionable before now, and there seems little reason on the face of things why the rumba should not have swept the country as it was swept by ragtime or as the original Russian Ballet influenced nearly everything from revue to household decoration. But in some ways the rumba is too closely allied to the fox-trot; in others, not closely enough.

The basic  $\frac{4}{4}$  time is common to both types of music; the harmonic differences are negligible and both share the same Afro-American tricks of melodic accent and syncopation.

On the other hand, the rumba is not sufficiently 'about' anything to appeal strongly to the Anglo-Saxon on his home ground. Popular taste in 'commercial' music runs along simple and monotonous lines; the recurring theme (in the words of a recent song) is Love, Love, Love. This theme need not disqualify the rumba, of course, for many rumbas are about Love. But the words of the rumba are in Spanish and their wit and cynicism do not translate well, even if British popular taste desired either of these qualities, which it most certainly does not.

The preoccupation of the minor composer with dance tunes, however, is largely economic. The composer of revue, musical comedy and operetta cannot hope to make as much money from

the sale of sheet-music as his predecessors. He must rely on the royalties from gramophone records and fees from public performance; and the easiest way to sell records and get your tunes played in public is to write in such a way that they can be played by dance bands.

It is nevertheless reasonable to attribute the low musical quality of the present-day popular song to the system which demands that such songs should conform to the narrow limits of the 'commercial' dance tune. That the public is capable of enjoying a dance tune which breaks away from the conventions is suggested by the perennial success of Cole Porter's 'Begin the Beguine,' which has twice the regulation number of bars that a good 'pop' should have, and by the popularity of the same composer's 'Night and Day,' which has a 'screwy' harmonic pattern by Tin Pan Alley standards.

Both these tunes, however, took some years to sink into the public consciousness, and their present-day (and deserved) success is not a little due to subtle plugging in general and their revival in musical films in particular.

From the early 1920's onwards there were frequent and exultant cries from organists in English cathedral towns that 'jazz was dying.' Jazz, as they did not know it (i.e., the improvised, 'non-commercial' music of the American Negro) was only just beginning to emerge from its primitive stage.

Popular dance music might well have died before 1930, or at least evolved and turned into something else, but for one thing: the advent of the crooner. Before the general use of radio the crooner had no larger an audience than could hear him singing through a megaphone in a hotel or dance hall. Rudy Vallee, the world's first crooner, still tells with delight how, when he played the saxophone in a band at London's Savoy Hotel, he was asked by customers not to sing. As he was paid only for playing the saxophone, this did not particularly break Mr. Vallee's heart; he kept the idea to himself, returned to the States, made a packet on the radio, and set a fashion which has since become an industry. The crooner not only prolonged the life of popular dance music; he brought something which it had hitherto lacked, which was Glamour.

While records by dance bands sold by the hundred thousand,

and Press reports of tax evasions revealed the fabulous sums earned by musicians, the Business did not have the popular attraction and promises of easy money it has since acquired. It was only the very astute who realized that one did not need to have musical talent to become a successful band leader. There was no particular glamour attached to playing in a band; in spite of the money to be earned, one obviously had to be able to play an instrument and that meant a certain amount of hard work, as well as having to find the money to buy the thing.

But when the crooner arrived all that changed at once. The capital outlay needed for success was nil; one needed neither instrument nor training; the microphone not only carried one's voice to an audience of millions over an entire continent, but enabled one to project that voice without effort to oneself or any of the tedious business of having to learn to sing.

The amateur's El Dorado was in sight. And why not? Had not the great Bing Crosby graduated from being a member of a trio with Paul Whiteman's band to becoming a film star without ever having learnt to read a note of music? Had not Rudy Vallee crooned his way to fame and a heavily sponsored 'Rudy Vallee Hour' on the radio? Had not Bing Crosby's brother Bob started out as a crooner and acquired his own world-famous swing band?

There were other idols, too, of course: Benny Goodman with his clarinet, Tommy Dorsey and his trombone, Harry James and his trumpet, and—but here we were up against the problem of having to play an instrument again. Better stick to crooning; it was less trouble and a safer bet altogether.

Crooning, too, had another advantage; it appealed to both sexes. You may read of women swooning at the sound of Frank Sinatra, but Bing Crosby is popular with both men and women and has been for more than ten years now.

Mr. Crosby's appeal to women is not surprising; he has great charm of personality and he picks nice sentimental tunes. Which might lead you to suppose that he would be too 'soft' for the male public. The exact opposite is the case; Bing Crosby seems to have even more followers among men than among women. In the B.B.C.'s programme 'Forces Favourites,' the requests of men serving overseas for Crosby's records outnumbered all other requests by five to one.

The appeal of Mr. Crosby to young men is largely a matter of identification. His mannerisms are easily imitated, and when the amateur crooner hears him singing he hears somebody making a noise which is not far removed from what he can do himself.

The question of identification certainly plays a large part in the success of Miss Vera Lynn; she makes the kind of noise that the average working girl would like to make, and nearly can. During the war I lived over a small factory in London; the girls in the workshop sang above the noise of the machines, and everything they sang (ranging from the Volga Boat Song to 'We'll Meet Again') they sang as it might have been sung by Miss Lynn. The effect is pure Cockney, for there is a Cockney way of singing which is as characteristic of our musical life as *bel canto* is characteristic of Italy.

The most easily recognisable features of what we might call 'Bow Bells Canto' are frequent breaks in the voice and a whining intonation which is accentuated by the convention that turns all sentimental songs into songs of a broken heart, regardless of the subject matter of the lyric.

Miss Lynn's appeal to the male public has nothing to do with identification, of course, but a great deal with being a sister substitute. The cultivation of sex-appeal is not part of her stock-in-trade; to a million servicemen stationed away from their families Vera Lynn was a kind of kid sister who reminded them of home. She has the same kind of voice, the same lack of sophistication, the same need for protection. She is a thoroughly Nice Girl and she sings the songs they like; and the songs they like cannot be better categorized than as Slush.

During the war the B.B.C. had an anti-Slush committee, a group of vigilantes constantly on the look-out for popular songs which were likely to prove 'psychologically unreliable.' Despite its laudable efforts to raise the public's taste in popular music, it was obvious that the public wanted to be left alone.

The tune called 'Somebody Stole My Gal' was not banned but was 'to be avoided' on all overseas wavelengths. Reason: the listener might have fears that his gal *had* been stolen while he was away—allegedly by a Canadian or an American. The B.B.C. ignored the fact that this tune was seldom played with its words, and that if it were, it had been a jazz 'classic' for so long that

only the most half-witted listener would ever have taken the words seriously or associated their meaning with even the most distant reality.

There were frequent broadcasts of songs whose main theme was desertion; but nobody had been known to suffer more than aesthetic misery on hearing the words of 'After You've Gone (and left me crying)' or 'Some of These Days (you're gonna miss me, honey)'. In fact, the policy of musical censorship has had no effect on public taste whatever. As in the last war, the soldier wanted his slush; and if he could not get it from the B.B.C. he got it somewhere else—from gramophone records, from concert parties, from local radio networks, from dance halls, from the largely Americanised Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme of the B.B.C.

Not even the B.B.C.'s ban on the 'swinging' of so-called classics has succeeded in stamping out this form of poor musical joke. A 'swing' version of Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Chanson Hindou' might be heard on the A.E.F. programme, but not on the B.B.C.'s self-controlled networks. Home-based soldiers were denied a hearing of 'Concerto for Two' because the tune is by Tschaikovsky; but the song was the favourite of one particular mess I knew, which was typical of many. The men learned it from Miss Vera Lynn's recording, bought out of regimental funds.

The B.B.C. succeeded neither in improving the standard of taste, nor in inspiring the composition of more 'robust' songs.

'Patriotic' songs fared no better either, and here it may well be suggested that popular taste has made itself felt. Apart from the short-lived success of 'There'll Always be an England' in the first winter of the war, there was little or no musical flag-waving. The public was too busy with a total war to sing about it. Musical patriotism was left to a few comedians and 'this'll-get-'em' songs, and to the late Major Glenn Miller and his American band of the Allied Expeditionary Force who were heard to pay 'tribute' to our Russian Allies with a special 'swing' version of the Volga Boat Song. Fortunately, daylight reception of British medium-wave stations is not very good in Russia and a possible international incident was thus avoided.

If popular taste is positive only in its preference for sentimental songs, at least it has shown a commendably negative reaction in

another direction. It has most ostentatiously not stifled its yawns at the antics of those band leaders who consider themselves propagandists. Nearly all band leaders, it should be realized, suffer from an inferiority complex. Their musical inferiority complex takes the form of wanting to conduct symphony orchestras.

If we accept the suggestion that the most popular (i.e., most widely heard) music of today is dance music largely imported from America, it is hardly surprising that this war has produced no war songs comparable to those of 1914-1918. 'Tipperary' and the rest were music-hall songs which happened to lend themselves to marching.

The prospect of highly mechanised warfare did not occur to Charing Cross Road, of course, and the winter of 1939-40 saw a spate of war songs, each advertised as the 'Tipperary' of World War II. The Forces ignored them, did their marching to 'Roll Out the Barrel' (Czechoslovakian) and later to 'Lili Marlene' (German). Probably only 'Lili Marlene' will survive as a 'war song,' and future generations may be somewhat surprised to learn that not only did the Second World War produce no more than one immortal tune, but that it was shared by both sides, owing (presumably) to the familiar 'shortage of supply.'

As to the future of popular taste in dance music and the animated drawing-room ballads of which it is largely composed, there are no signs at present of any desire for anything else. Any attempt at innovation, any experiment or effort to bring melody or harmony up to the standards of Puccini, for instance, have met with failure. The English public no longer, as in Handel's day, seems to want a tune to beat time to; it prefers something to cry to.

In the popular music industry the antithesis of 'commercial' is 'hot jazz.' Or at least it used to be, until 'hot jazz' was taken up by the industry and exploited into something much 'smarter' and commercially sounder, called 'swing.' As 'swing' could hardly have existed, let alone have succeeded, without the previous history of 'hot jazz' we had better start at the beginning and see where it all began.

Jazz, to give the term a general definition, is the secular music of the American Negro; it is largely improvised according to traditional rules and conventions. Its rhythms and accents form



the basis of the 'commercial' fox-trot; it is hailed as 'folk-music' by some and revered with all the pomp and jargon of a New Art Movement by others. It may be vocal or instrumental, gay or melancholy; it is Negro in origin, but some of its finest exponents have been white men. Its creators have either died in sordid proletarian obscurity or have flourished in Hollywood and been presented to British royalty. It is a world of contrasts, riches and poverty, fights, drunkards, dope addicts, illiterates, educated musicians, all linked by one common bond: enthusiasm for the music called jazz.

The exact nature of jazz and its personalities is outside the scope of this paper, and its discussion would lead to many irrelevant technicalities. Jazz, indeed, is such a vast subject that there is in this country a weekly paper devoted to its study and propagation. I feel, therefore, that we should consider less what jazz is than how and why a weekly journal like *The Melody Maker* should enjoy the circulation and respect that it does.

The cult of jazz as a Serious Subject began, not in the United States, but in Europe. In the immediate post-war years the intelligentsia of France, Germany and England experimented with 'the jazz idiom,' but it resulted in no more than the frequent use of certain jazz mannerisms in 'serious' music, and provided a good excuse for violence and unintelligibility in the other arts. It was all justified as expressing the spirit of the age—which had less than nothing to do with genuine jazz, the essence of which is complete unawareness of anything except immediate personal problems, musical and emotional.

By 1926 the antics of Les Six were no longer of public interest; Stravinsky's 'Ragtime' was a museum piece, and the Jazz Age (which paradoxically produced little jazz that was ever heard in public) drew peacefully to a close.

Or so everybody thought at the time. In fact, the jazz age was just beginning. British gramophone companies, perhaps encouraged by the success of 'Blackbirds' at the London Pavilion, began to slip records of Negro bands into their monthly lists without comment. I doubt if anybody expected these records to attain large sales, but the matrices had been sent from America and their reproduction cost little.

The result of the gramophone companies' enterprise was by no

means a financial flop. It paid its way; but it also laid the foundations of later prosperity and achieved an unexpected *succès d'estime*. The folk music of the twentieth-century Negro made no apparent appeal to the mass of the British public; it did not even register with those political groups who (one would have thought) would have jumped at the Social Significance of the music of oppressed fellow-proletarians.

The first suckers for jazz were the undergraduates of Cambridge University. Cambridge in those days possessed relatively more portable gramophones and opportunities for playing them than any other community in the world. The gramophone shops in Sidney Street and King's Parade were almost to University life what the coffee houses had been to eighteenth-century London.

First one company then another issued jazz records every month. It was not long before these records began to warrant special mention in the printed supplements. The blurbs flattered the prospective buyer that he was 'a connoisseur,' and warned him that no gentleman's son could consider himself educated if he failed to buy the latest 'hot' record.

There was an additional stimulus at Cambridge at this time in the person of a rich young Spanish-American called Fred Elizalde. Mr. Elizalde, who, much to the disappointment of his admirers, was later wounded fighting for Franco, organized the first undergraduate dance band at Cambridge; and his style was uncompromisingly 'hot.' After each vacation, Fred Elizalde seemed to return with even more glamorous and incredible stories of the activities and fabulous achievements of real live 'jazzmen' whom he had actually met in the States, but who were no more than names on record labels to his fellow undergraduates.

Enthusiasm for 'hot jazz' grew and spread to Oxford. With 'hot jazz' a sure seller in the two university towns, the gramophone companies discovered that whatever the rest of the country might think of the stuff, there was money to be made by the sale of these rather specialized recordings in Oxford and Cambridge alone.

Meanwhile, a London publisher of popular music decided to issue a monthly house magazine to advertise his tunes. It was called *The Melody Maker* and was principally devoted to news and gossip concerning London dance bands and musicians. The

paper was bought up by Odhams Press, a review of the latest records was introduced and the nation-wide cult of jazz began a career which has not yet ended.

In jazz, you see, it is names that count. Each player is (in his own way) a composer; therefore it is of paramount importance to the enthusiast that whenever a record is released he should know who plays what instrument. This preoccupation with individual personalities may seem a little exaggerated to the layman, but it is surely no more unreasonable than wanting to know whether a particular symphony is by Beethoven or somebody else. One likes to know, if only for future reference, or to avoid being taken in twice.

*The Melody Maker* printed the names of the famous musicians making the records in bold type. If a name was wrong, if a player was unidentifiable, a controversy would follow.

In a couple of years what had once been an undergraduate's hobby became a magnificent obsession. Youth in its teens and early twenties, with no liking for any other kind of music, grew to be expert in the theory and practice of jazz; it knew record personalities by heart; it bought much despised 'commercial' recordings for the sake of eight hot bars by some star; pilgrimages were made to a shop in Whitechapel where they sold American records not issued in this country, and any friend likely to go to the States was instructed to bring as many recordings as he could find.

Interest spread from Mayfair to Morden; jazz, which had hitherto appealed only to the wealthier amateur and the 'semi-pro,' was now taken up by amateurs of all classes, the majority of whom could neither read nor play music and were not conscious of ever having heard any other type of music.

The obsession spread from Britain to the Continent. Periodicals devoted to the subject appeared in France, Holland and Belgium; the jargon of jazz became a new *lingua franca*. Music which had originally been created for the personal pleasure of semi-literate Negro musicians became the subject of solemn discussion and learned research. Names like Modigliani and 'Fats' Waller, Delius and Duke Ellington, Braque and Bix Beiderbecke jostled each other in innumerable essays on *Le jazz hot*.

To those who had done the initial propaganda for jazz, regard-

ing it as no more than an attractive backwater of the main stream of music, this raising of an intriguing hobby to the status of an 'art' full of cultural significance was not only embarrassing. Like all other people's obsessions it became a crashing bore.

But the harm had been done. *The Melody Maker* became a weekly with a circulation of some 30,000 and an international reputation; nearly 200 Rhythm Clubs were formed up and down the country where members met regularly to discuss and play records and listen to lectures brimful of phrases like 'sincerity,' 'Negro feeling,' 'rhythmic urge,' all of which were heard in a state of open-mouthed rapture by the youthful members.

If jazz may be said to have had any cause it was fortunately not damaged by this nation-wide tendency to take things too seriously. The more purple passages of praise had no circulation outside the pages of *The Melody Maker*, its kindred publications in Europe and the four walls of the Rhythm Clubs. Which was just as well, if jazz was to be respected for what it is: an interesting pebble on the vast beach of music.

But there is no knowing what might have happened if some of the propagandists had had their way. Once the B.B.C. banned a discussion by jazz experts on the 'jazzing' of classics. The Fans were most indignant. After all, nobody had wanted to say anything worse than this: Rimsky-Korsakov's *Hymn to the Sun* 'is just a pretty-pretty but quite uninspired piece of music, and I think Tom Dorsey's swing version of it was definitely an improvement on the original.'

It seems that after all the B.B.C. *does* try to stop people making fools of themselves.

In the early 1930's the cult of jazz had been so highly developed in Europe that American bands were beginning to make records for the European market only. This typically American music seemed to have no future on its home ground, until the vogue spread from Europe and hit the Atlantic seaboard of the United States. When America started to take up its own music, there was no stopping it; but it had to be commercialized to be worth anybody's while. So it was; and they called it 'swing.'

The true nature of jazz is much more varied (within its very strict limits) than most people think. It is not all noise and blare;

indeed, some of the best music by Duke Ellington, generally considered the most important figure in jazz, is almost inaudible except when played through a microphone.

But the general tendency on the part of the inexpert public is to confuse noise with vitality, so that when jazz was to be commercialized as 'swing' it was the dynamics and inessentials of jazz that were exploited, not its individual artistic possibilities.

It was as though a school of composers had arisen to base its work entirely on the accompaniments from Verdi's operas without ever bothering to write any tune to be accompanied. This is no exaggeration. One of the best-known of all 'swing' pieces, 'In the Mood,' lasts for three minutes and consists of little more than the constant repetition of a phrase which had occurred *once* in a jazz record years before. 'Swing,' in short, is jazz reduced to an absurdity and deprived of what little spontaneity and artistic merit it might have.

In spite of its commercial exploitation, 'swing' is in no sense a development of jazz. It uses the same instrumentation, the same rhythms, harmonies, tempo and conventions. It is as conservative as jazz, without needing to be. I suggested earlier on that the purely technical conservatism of all kinds of modern dance music was a little puzzling, that the average musician had not progressed far enough yet to feel at home with the harmonies of the 1890's. The explanation lies largely in the fact that improvisation particularly plays a considerable part in jazz. Players improvise both individually and collectively, and even if it were not safer to choose simple harmonies for this purpose, the standard of musical education of the players (in an academic sense) is lower than in any other branch of Western music.

'Swing,' however, is written down for the most part, and there is no practical need for this caution, especially as the majority of its exponents have some musical education. But then one of the first objects of 'swing' is to imitate jazz; it apes its mannerisms and its simplicity in the hope that the indiscriminating listener will imagine he is listening to the real thing.

I have dwelt at length on the differences between jazz and 'swing' because it is a question that constantly occupies the lay mind. Even among devotees of the two forms there exists a certain amount of doubt, though in fairness it should be said that

your jazz connoisseur despises 'swing,' whereas the 'swing' fan is blissfully ignorant of any distinction so long as what he hears has glamour.

The appeal of 'swing' is completely unintellectual. You will rarely hear an addict complain that one example of 'swing' is less satisfying than another; but a jazz fan is very choosy, and may prefer the playing of musicians from New Orleans to the total exclusion of that by bands from Chicago. To the 'swing' fan, there is no pleasure beyond a sensuous, almost masochistic delight in sheer noise. Everything must be loud—instruments, presentation and the raucous voices of the little girls who bawl nursery lyrics at a jitterbugging audience.

If any proof is needed that 'swing' has nothing to do with even the most primitive art, one has only to consider the personal records of band leaders in Britain. In the days when jazz was beginning to attract a certain amount of public attention, they held up their hands in horror (and carefully ghosted Press articles) at the idea of touching the stuff with the end of a barge pole.

In 1933, Duke Ellington and his all-Negro orchestra visited Britain and were a great success. Whereon our local band leaders tried to cash in on the wake of the formerly despised 'hot' jazz composer, and included at least a couple of Ellington compositions in their broadcasts for the sake of prestige. When it was discovered that 'swing' was likely to pay a dividend, these same band leaders cashed in on the new public demand for a flashy-sounding music that has never been equalled for tunelessness and lack of artistic content in the whole history of music.

Not that one can blame them, of course; the mentality of the average band leader is hardly capable of guiding even an idiot public towards something aesthetically better. Besides, 'swing' was news. There were films being made about it, special editions of *Fortune* and *Life* being printed about it, and New York's Carnegie Hall was being crammed to the roof by shrieking adolescents come to hear their favourite 'swing' stars in jam sessions.<sup>1</sup>

If 'swing' had all the superficial characteristics of jazz, it may be asked why 'swing' has appealed to popular taste, and jazz has not. The reason, I believe, is that 'swing' flatters the hearer, kids

<sup>1</sup> Jam Session: a gathering of musicians playing without music, improvising on familiar melodies. Etym.: jam: a get-together as in 'traffic jam.'

him into thinking that he is hearing modern art; it is pretentious and sounds as if no expense had been spared (always a sure bet in popular entertainment).

Such melody as it has consists of no more than a couple of easily remembered phrases, repeated *ad nauseam* and with such violence that Rossini's famous *crescendi* sound like a dying fall. It is music for morons, with a vocabulary that is as catchy as it is pointless. The 'swing' fanatic, usually spotty-faced and aged about 16 to 22 (both sexes), punctuates his talk with words like 'hep-cats,' 'in the groove,' and other phrases which were one time known only to Harlem. His letters are full of abbreviations and affectations like 'comin',' 'it sure is,' 'cos.' I know because I get just that sort of letter, which usually asks 'what is the longest a note has ever been held on the trumpet or clarinet, and who held it?' As if it mattered.

The interest in 'swing,' in fact, is scarcely an artistic one; if you have heard one example of 'swing' you have heard the lot. So the fan has to find something else on which to feed his enthusiasm; he becomes obsessed with the personalities of 'swing,' with those who play it, and not with what is played; his interest in music is comparable with the film fan's interest in the artistic possibilities of the cinema.

Perhaps the most peculiar thing in the whole set-up is that the 'swing' fan, being acquainted with the superficialities of jazz as exploited by 'swing,' is left completely cold by 'real' jazz. Another form of music, so closely related technically and even played by stars in both spheres, is a closed world to him. Messrs. Benny Goodman, Tom Dorsey and others were pioneers of jazz fifteen years ago, and today are the undisputed 'kings of swing,' but their present-day fans will have nothing to do with their more artistically satisfying past. It is almost as though the fans felt ashamed of their idols' indiscretions; after all, no film fan will collect photographs of his favourite actress as she was when she was a Mack Sennett bathing belle. And so jazz, which has a certain wit, vitality and occasional exotic beauty, tends to be ignored by the masses. It must be admitted, however, that there is a credit side to 'swing.' From a purely technical point of view the standard of playing in the average dance orchestra has improved beyond recognition.

Both jazz and 'swing' may prove to have had a lasting, if indirect, effect on the question of racial relationships. Your jazz enthusiast and your 'swing' fan represent a generation that is growing up without colour prejudice. Their heroes are black and white, and the vogue for 'swing' has meant that mixed bands have not only made gramophone records together (a very rare thing fifteen years ago), but have actually appeared on the same stand in exclusive New York hotels.

It may not be very much, this—but at least it's something. The cult of Negro music, good and bad, is no longer a fashion limited to a few intellectuals, as it was in the early 1920's; it has spread to hundreds of thousands of young people on both sides of the Atlantic. The result may not be good music, but it's damned good democracy.

It is odd to reflect that there was never a time in the history of music when the divisions between various types of music were so marked as they are today; that in the days when the country was ruled by the aristocracy under a semi-feudal system and there had not yet been any French Revolution, there was no such thing as 'light,' 'popular' or 'classical' music. When Handel wrote the Royal Fireworks Music, the people of London turned out in their hundreds for its first performance; the fireworks were a washout, but the Londoners stayed behind to hear the music. Handel was not a 'highbrow' composer, any more than Mozart was. The tunes in Mozart's operas were sung in the streets of Prague; they were in an idiom that was familiar to all classes of eighteenth-century society.

It was only when the nineteenth-century romantics got going that music began to break up into two distinct parts: one for The People, the other for The Artist. The romantic composers decided that 'Art Music' (*Kunstmusik*) was too good for the common people and ought to be segregated as something semi-sacred; with the result that where 'straight' music has evolved to such a degree that it is virtually unintelligible to the 'ordinary listener,' 'popular' music has progressed no further than the general state of music nearly 150 years ago.

This I think is a likely explanation of the 'arrested development' to which I referred in connection with modern dance



music; and it goes for most forms of 'popular' music. Wagner may have kidded himself that he was creating a genuine *Volksmusik* in theory; in practice he succeeded in widening the breach between People and Artist which Schumann and Mendelssohn had made before him.

I am not suggesting for a moment, of course, that 'Art Music' has no following; it is merely that the twentieth-century descendants of Handel's Londoners, of the citizens of Prague who whistled tunes from *Figaro* in the streets, have been left behind—this, mark you, in spite of compulsory education and incomparably easier and more frequent opportunities of hearing music.

The masterpieces of the Standard Repertoire may be heard by more people than ever before; but there are equally a far greater number of people proportionately who don't understand them. Indeed, it is not being unnecessarily cynical to maintain that the standard of popular taste in music is in inverse ratio to the improvement in facilities to raise it.

Of all groups of listeners to music in this country, the most conservative is the group which is devoted to 'light' music, and which thinks of the music it wants in terms of tea-time trios, of palm-court orchestras and end-of-pier bands. It is a public which is middle-aged, content with music as it knew it in its youth. All the marvels of modern science designed to bring symphony orchestras into the home regardless of expense leave them cold.

The B.B.C., which must be recognized as a semi-official disher-out of musical culture, has, until recently, pandered to the tastes of this public in a way that nearly broke the hearts of those who hoped that radio might raise instead of lower the standard of music and its appreciation. Our radio programmes were filled with concerts of Victorian melodies, with noises designed to remind the listener of Good Old Days by the seaside, of Grand Hotels which few listeners had ever been able to afford to stay in.

Characteristic of the B.B.C.'s outlook on radio is to give the public not radio, but something which constantly reminds it of something else, such as theatres or piers or parks. I am not suggesting that there should be no pier-and-park types of programme broadcast, for these are known to be popular; I am accusing the B.B.C. of having neglected many chances of giving the public the

best music *of its kind*. A recent policy of the B.B.C., however, is to pass over the tea-shop repertoire lock, stock and band-parts to full symphony orchestras; and as one of the many people who have agitated to hear Strauss waltzes played in their original form, I am personally delighted.

But is the 'light music' enthusiast delighted? I don't think so; at least, I doubt if this departure in technique and performance has widened his musical horizon very much, if at all. Programmes of familiar, hackneyed pieces crammed together under titles like 'Music for All' and 'Carnival Concert' are less likely to interest the middle-brow, middle-aged listener in other music by the composers of 'Valse Triste' and 'Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2' than to make the inveterate highbrow let his hair down for a change and enjoy a Sousa march.

The B.B.C.'s policy of musical slumming is no ill wind; it just depends which way they think it's blowing. I do not believe that the listener who hears 'Valse Triste' played by ninety-five players is going to rush to his radio set and switch on Sibelius' fourth symphony next time it's played. On the other hand, the one-track-minded devotee of Good Music may just possibly listen to a hitherto despised Offenbach overture because it is given 'class' by being played by a symphony orchestra, and symphony orchestras are up his particular street.

Which, let's face it, is a step in the right direction. If there is one disturbing aspect of popular taste in music in this country it is the almost entire lack of catholicity. Public and critics are happy with Shakespeare and the latest detective stories; public and critics can appreciate Rembrandt and Fougasse; or John Gielgud and Max Miller; or 'Carnet de Bal' and Mickey Mouse; Test matches at Lord's or cricket on the green. But public and critics will not, when it comes to music, bother to look over the wall of their prejudice to see what goes on over the other side.

How can we ever hope for an uneducated public to revert to the level of musical taste its ancestors enjoyed two hundred years ago, when B.B.C. announcers tell us that 'this symphony dates, of course, from Beethoven's middle period'? Why 'of course'? It isn't just a question of 'selling' music by informal presentation; it is a question of setting a good example. Music (i.e., 'good'

music) has a thoroughly bad reputation among the masses, towards whom the so-called 'music-lover' behaves as an unnecessarily and unbearably superior person.

We are supposed to be living in a democratic age. Well, democracy isn't all a matter of raising the lower ones up; the higher ones have got to come down and see what's going on in the four-ale bar, and then everybody can graduate to the saloon bar and a good time can be had by all.

We know that popular taste in music is a pretty poor thing for the most part, but there is no need to keep rubbing it in as the B.B.C. does. What is needed is more of the attitude of the late Leslie Howard, who used to shave every morning to Cole Porter's 'Begin the Beguine'; more of the attitude of my neighbour Constant Lambert, who plays records by Fats Waller so loudly that I cannot sleep and have to seek the protection of my own records of Louis Armstrong at his loudest as a counter-irritant.

If more people were less afraid to admit that they liked 'cheap' music, and fewer were intent on trying to uplift us on the radio with high-falutin' descriptions of this 'simply *divine* melody by Bach,' we might be getting somewhere.

The 'light' music public is potentially halfway towards the appreciation of more difficult things, but it is easily frightened off trying them. With the result that while Deanna Durbin singing 'One Fine Day' and Schubert's 'Ave Maria' is immensely popular, it is almost impossible to get this public to listen to a whole performance of *Madame Butterfly* or have a stab at the remainder of Schubert's 603 songs unless they are dished up and called *Lilac Time*.

A thoroughly rousing performance of the overture to *Zampa* by Toscanini does more good to clear the air of cant and pretentious nonsense about 'divine' Bach melodies than any amount of talking down and saying to the public: 'music is great fun, really—honestly it is. Listen to this, it's by a chap called Beethoven—you won't have heard of him, of course, but he was a very human kind of fellow, just like you and me. . . .'

I begin to wonder, indeed, whether the British brass band movement is not a result of a musical section of the population preferring to make its own music in its own time to putting up

with the sanctimoniousness which accompanies the performance of Good Music.

The British brass band is peculiar to this country; it is less a creative musical movement than an example of working-class recreation which happens to take the form of music. It has the attraction not of an Art but of a Sport, like whippet racing, football pools (lotteries) or Bradford League Cricket.

No ordinary aesthetic criticisms apply, nor will the brass band enthusiast allow them to apply. To the ordinary professional musician a brass band is just another way of playing the old familiar overtures, selections and waltzes; it attracts the player's families and friends, and a crowd of rosetted followers cheer favourite bands at the annual Alexandra Palace or Belle Vue Festival. The occasion has an atmosphere of Cup Finals, not music festivals.

In a technical sense the British brass band is a remarkable affair; it has been the training ground for many famous brass players who have graduated to our symphony orchestras. But any suggestion that brass band music is an imperfect and unsatisfactory substitute for the Real Thing brings forth innumerable angry protests.

I was unwise enough in a Socialist daily paper to set down my purely musical criticism of brass band music, the lack of original music composed for bands, and suggested that only the very few top-rank bands made a bearable noise at all. A careless sub-editor headed the column 'No More Brass Bands!' and in spite of the fact that I had merely reported the B.B.C.'s plan to cut down the number of brass band broadcasts, I was assailed by letters written in such terms that I might have imagined myself a Fascist, a traitor, and cruel to animals. It was as though I had attacked the working man's religion and his wife's honour.

The truth is that my own inclinations in music do not lie in the direction of brass bands; they give me nothing that I cannot get elsewhere, in Berlioz's *Messe des Morts*, for instance, and my presence at many Crystal Palace festivals was largely dictated by the fact that the bars were open all day. In this respect it was a great outing for the professional musician as well as for the brass bands crowds from the North.

Personal reactions have no place in this Paper, of course, which is intended to be an analysis of other people's taste; but I do

think that the brass band movement is more a sociological phenomenon than a musical one, inasmuch as it contributes more to the social life of a section of the British people than it does to its musical life.

And not the least important sociological aspect of the brass band movement is that it encourages the people to do something for themselves; the repertoire may be limited and therefore of no great interest to the general public, but at least the brass band player is *making* music, not just sitting back and listening to it.

And that, surely, is something to be grateful for, because as a nation we have grown incorrigibly lazy where amusing ourselves is concerned.

When it comes to the discussion and analysis of popular taste in what we may call 'Good Music,' we are up against the most difficult problem of all. For one thing, popular taste changes so rapidly and unexpectedly that what is 'popular' at the moment of writing this may well be unpopular, or at least neglected, by the time it appears in print.

Where Good Music is concerned the British people may be said to be divided into two sections: those who make it, and those who listen to it. In the first category we have the choral societies. In Wales the choirs are largely drawn from the working classes, in Leeds and Huddersfield from the *bourgeoisie*, but while only a few choirs are known to the public, choral singing is much more of a nation-wide affair than the brass band movement, which is mostly confined to the big industrial towns of the North.

Also (and I know that to say this is asking for trouble) the standard of musical taste, if limited, is very much higher among the choirs than the brass bands. The brass band repertoire, as we have seen, consists principally of marches, arrangements of 'popular' overtures, waltzes and light-opera selections, while there is scarcely a village in England which does not rehearse through the winter to sing Handel's *Messiah* at Easter.

Among the choirs it must be admitted that popular taste changes hardly at all; the taste of those who create music for their own enjoyment is extremely conservative—the better-known Handel oratorios, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, some Elgar and (in current parlance) you've had it.

Nor is any great spirit of adventure noticeable when these same musical amateurs set about performing opera. The Amateur Operatic Societies don't get much further than the light operas of Sullivan and German. The reason is largely economic; theatres are not so easy to hire as halls, there is scenery and lighting to be considered, and from a purely musical point of view 'grand' opera provides difficult parts for soloists and not nearly enough to keep a chorus really busy.

The characteristically British custom of applying the Team Spirit to music finds its highest form of expression in choral music; but it does not extend to orchestral music. Again, the reason may be economic: instruments cost money, and so does tuition, and though a good orchestral ensemble calls for a highly developed team spirit, it has not the same obvious physical appeal to the unskilled performer as singing in a choir. If it had, then it would be safe to say that the number of first-rate choirs in this country might not outnumber the first-class orchestras by about ten to one.

It is when we come to the second category, the Listener to Music, or 'music lover,' that we find Popular Taste a most elusive thing to define. Between the two wars (1919-39) there were at least two distinct and large-scale musical vogues; at one time the musical public could not get enough Bach, then it felt itself starved for Sibelius, while since the beginning of World War II there has been a boom in Tschaikovsky, who was just beginning to become a vogue a little while before war broke out.

The craze for Bach, which flourished in the 1920's, possibly as a reaction to the chaotic state of music at the time, now seems to have faded; certainly, even if things were normal, no concert-giver could count on filling his hall with an all-Bach programme in the way that the Wednesday night Bach programmes attracted the Promenade-goer nearly twenty years ago.

It is possible, too, that the popularity and ubiquity of Sibelius' music during the 1930's was largely the result of reaction; the musical public found clarity, a classical severity and some singable tunes in the work of a composer with an intensely personal style. Sibelius came as a relief from the mushiness of Richard Strauss, and perhaps the public was proud to think that there was a contemporary composer worthy of attention. Whatever the reason, Sibelius took his place as a provider of one-man pro-

grammes of his symphonies and symphonic poems, where a few years before he had been known only as the composer of 'Valse Triste' and 'Finlandia.'

At the beginning of this Paper I suggested that generalization about popular taste in Good Music would present a difficult problem, and one reason for this fear is that the British musical public (and that of any other country for that matter) is full of paradoxes.

It has a horror of anything in the way of a tune that is the slightest bit 'vulgar'; yet it wallows in Elgar and *Madame Butterfly*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. Its whole instinct and code of behaviour is against the unbridled demonstration of emotion; so there are more performances of Tschaikovsky's symphonies than almost anybody else's. It mistrusts virtuosity, and would rather hear a second-rate German pianist play a lot of wrong notes in Beethoven (thereby showing his 'sincerity') than hear Egon Petri play Liszt's Dante Sonata; so it flocks to hear Horowitz play the second Tschaikovsky piano concerto.

It is known to loathe opera; so it queues up overnight to hear Wagner at Covent Garden. It is alleged to be 'unmusical'; so it regards music with a sentimental solemnity and passionate devotion equalled only by dog-lovers. It despises 'light' music, but is delighted to think it can appreciate Haydn's 'Surprise' symphony. It cannot cope with the 'cacophony' of Modern Music in a concert hall, but never utters a word of protest on hearing Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* in Disney's 'Fantasia.'

Among this musical public is a section (and a fairly large section) which is addicted either to one kind of music only, or to one method of listening to it. There are the Wagnerites who will listen to no other music; and (before the war) many hundreds of people who packed the Proms every night during the summer, but never went near a concert hall during the normal musical season.

The opera-going public is necessarily small, as there is never very much opera for them to hear. It is unlikely that opera will ever receive the Government subsidy in this country that some may hope for; which is not surprising since football, not opera, is the national sport of the country. But what there is in the way of an opera public is extremely conservative in its tastes; it will have

nothing new or unfamiliar, not even if it is by composers it worships, like Verdi or Puccini. It will listen politely to Verdi's *Falstaff* and *Otello*, to Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and *Turandot*, but subsequently stays away from the theatre until it is given *Il Trovatore* and *Madame Butterfly* again.

The ballet audience, which has certain qualifications to be considered part of the musical public, is exactly the opposite. The Sadler's Wells Company cannot produce enough novelties to satisfy its audience. I think, however, that the ballet audience's qualification is only a half-qualification, inasmuch as it *overhears* the music in the same way as the movie-goer overheard Stravinsky's *Sacre*. The spectacle distracts, and the audience is not aware of any modernities which would upset it if heard 'cold.'

Tschaikovsky gets the biggest break on the whole. He was well up in popular favour before the war, but since Russia became an ally as well as the public seeing that film with 'the' piano concerto in it, there's been no stopping either him, his compatriots or anything sounding vaguely like a piano concerto.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting, this devotion to piano concertos as popular items in programmes. It is due, I believe, to the fact that anybody can go up to a piano and get a note out of it; the professional pianist is only doing something better than we are all capable of doing badly. Accordingly, the pianist is a far bigger draw than the violinist. With a violin you have to make the sound yourself, hold the instrument up properly, finger it and bow it; it's altogether too difficult and mysterious. The pianist is not only in touch with the rest of us, but the opening bars of the Tschaikovsky second concerto are a wish-fulfilment of something all amateur pianists would dearly love to do: make a huge noise on the piano with an orchestra.

When Russia came into the war, the other Russian composers came in to bat on a perfect wicket after a sound opening stand by Tschaikovsky and his concerto. Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Rachmaninov are steady scorers, but the rest of the side is mostly composed of rabbits. In fairness it must be said that it is no fault of the rabbits that they find themselves in the team. The Selec-

<sup>2</sup> Alan Rawsthorne recounts how, on lecturing troops on music, he plays the opening bars of Tschaikovsky's second concerto and when his audience is asked to identify it, nine out of ten reply: 'The Warsaw Concerto'



tors (the B.B.C. and public concert-givers) dragged them in with characteristic over-enthusiasm.

The Russians 'are our Allies,' they said, 'let's play all the Russian music we can find—good, bad and indifferent—the public is in a strong Russophile mood and will listen to anything Russian. After all, they are our Allies . . .'

So Russian music was 'saluted.' It was unfair on our Allies, and unfair on us. What was even unfairer was Britain's retaliation; we sent a lot of the duller and more esoteric English music to be played in state in Moscow. It happened only once—probably to avoid the risk of endangering otherwise friendly relations between the two Powers.

The popularity of Russian music, however, was not caused by the Alliance, but stimulated by it. The British have always had a particularly warm spot in their hearts for the Russians, and it dates further back than the Diaghilev ballet, further than the popularity of Tschaikovsky in this country during his own lifetime, further back even than the Napoleonic wars. The Russians, for all that their climate is more severe than ours, have always brought us a certain barbaric warmth and vitality and colour in their art which are lacking in our own. And these qualities, an essential part of Russian music, were never more welcomed by the British people than during the war with its black-out and unprecedented drabness.

The cult of Russian music, in short, has supplied us with Glamour, in the same way that the limited number of familiar masterpieces from the standard repertoire which are now being repeated year in and year out, provide the public with a sound artistic investment. You can't go wrong with the Classics—a very important consideration when music was in short supply and you might be bombed to blazes tomorrow.

Having surveyed the immediate past and present popular taste in music, what of the future? Until foreign music, foreign orchestras, singers, conductors and virtuosi start travelling around again, it is unlikely that popular taste will be given much of a chance to change appreciably even if it wants to.

Certainly nobody can prophesy in which direction popular taste in music is likely to go. Nobody could have foreseen the

Bach boom, nor the Sibelius boom, nor the Tschaikovsky boom. Tomorrow it may be Mozart, or Verdi, or Berlioz; the public will ask for what it wants, and what it wants is usually something that supplies a 'long-felt want.'

There are some optimists (financially interested, of course) who have prophesied a great future for music with the New Audience—the thousands of ordinary people in and out of uniform who have sat and listened to symphony orchestras in camps and factories during the war. 'You see,' they say smugly, 'they simply *love* Good Music. They will be the audience of the future.'

Much as I hate to doubt that these musically illiterate thousands do enjoy Good Music, I am churlish enough to think that they listened to Good Music because they were fed-up, far from home, had the music brought to them and had little freedom to escape to do the things they wanted to.

On the other hand, an entirely new and genuinely musical public is arriving in this country: the thousands of British troops who have been in Italy and have developed an unbelievable enthusiasm there for opera. For the first time they have been seeing and hearing really 'grand' opera, in its native surroundings of gilt, plush, garlic and encores; and they love it.

It seems the gramophone companies are the only people likely to benefit from this new audience; their catalogues at least can revive pleasant memories. ENSA and other music-organizers, so optimistic about the future of music following the experiences of wartime, will not know where to begin when it comes to opera.

As for the rest, the wartime military and factory-worker concert-goers who are being backed as the New Audience in this country, it depends largely on the answer to one question:

How many of these thousands, who now get their symphonies for sixpence or whatever it is, will walk across the road to a concert hall if they can take their sweetheart to the pictures, even if that costs them as much as half a crown?

Precious few, I imagine. Lots of things boom in wartime (far too many, far too close for comfort), and it is unusual for the same things to boom in the peace that follows. Personally, I shall be delighted to see a boom in music, but from what I know of popular taste in music of all kinds, the whole set-up will be just as confusing as it is now.

## NATURAL HISTORY

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### SOME NOTES ON VIPERS

by BRIAN VESEY-FITZGERALD

THE VIPER or Adder (*Vipera berus*), our only poisonous snake, is widely distributed throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It does not occur in Ireland owing, it is said, to the interference of St. Patrick. In Hampshire it is common, and in especially suitable localities, of which there are several, it is plentiful. Despite this, the viper is comparatively rarely seen even by those whose occupations, one would imagine, would provide many opportunities for observation. Because of this lack of observation in the field, coupled with the unreasoning fear of snakes that is common to most men, all sorts of misconceptions have arisen around the viper and are widely believed.

Some snakes have vestiges of limbs left, but our three snakes have none. Their skeletons consist only of skull, backbone and ribs. Their skulls are notable for their elasticity. The lower jaw-bones are not fused together, but are joined at the point of the chin by an elastic muscle and are also hinged to a bone which is loosely connected with the skull instead of being hinged to a fixed part of it. They are thus able to swallow objects much larger than their heads. The teeth, which are recurved sharp hooks (all alike save for the poison fangs of the viper) do not grow round the jaws but on a number of bars of bone which run lengthwise down the mouth. The two outermost bars, which can be moved independently and work backwards and forwards, form the lower jaws. The hooked teeth of one bar rake the prey down the gullet with their backward movement, and when the bar is moved forward

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again the teeth disengage because the prey is held fast by the other bars. Each bar in turn performs in a like manner until the victim disappears. The teeth (the number varies with the species) do not grow in sockets but in a groove along the bone, and when they are grown they are fused to the bone itself. If they wear out or are broken they are replaced by others, and this process can be continued indefinitely. This pattern is common of each of our three species, but in the viper there is the addition of poison fangs. These are two large hooked fangs on the front of the upper jaw and are bored with a channel from near the top to near the tip. When the jaws are shut they lie horizontally, pointing backwards. The opening of the mouth pushes down the part of the upper jaw on which they grow, thus cocking them ready for use, and the same movement (the opening of the mouth) squeezes the gland in which the poison is retained so that it runs down the channel in the fang. The poison, by the way, is a saliva which digests the prey as well as paralysing it.

The backbone of all our snakes has three types of vertebrae: the neck vertebrae which carry the skull, the body vertebrae each of which carry two ribs and extend all the way down to the vent, and the tail vertebrae which do not carry ribs, but which do have at the vent end a number of projections which look rather like short ribs. There is no breastbone. The ribs are attached to the backbone by cup and ball joints so that they can be moved freely and can be opened wide (particularly the forward ones) to allow bulky food to pass. They can also move backwards and forwards and when they do so, as each pair is connected with a band across the belly overlapping the one behind it, the snake moves forward.

The skin is very strong and elastic, and is covered on the top and the sides with small lozenge-shaped scales, but there are no scales on the belly where the skin is in bands stretching right across. On the head the scales are larger, and their number and the position in which they are set are of some help in determining the species, but the design is not constant: extra scales are sometimes grown and sometimes adjoining scales become fused. Outside the skin and the scales there is a horny, but transparent, layer of outer skin, which covers the whole snake, including the lidless eyes. As there is no opening in this outer envelope at the eyes the

tears come away through the nostrils. Their outer skin does not grow, and as snakes grow throughout their lives it has to be shed periodically, a process which is known as "sloughing." The outer skin loosens around the mouth and the owner then rubs its head against a stone or some suitable object, frees its head, and then crawls out of the skin. All snakes are irritable when they are due to slough and extra-irritable during the actual process. The ears are also hidden under the skin, but they are rudimentary anyhow and it seems probable that snakes are deaf to sounds. They make up for this by being extraordinarily sensitive to vibration, which is one of the reasons why man, being normally a heavy-footed and clumsy creature, so rarely sees them. In addition, they have in the long, forked tongue a very sensitive organ of touch and their sight is extraordinarily keen.

The internal organs are arranged in pairs, but instead of being placed side by side come one behind the other. The right lung, which is the larger, is cellular in front only, the back part being no more than an air sac. Snakes breathe by moving the ribs. There is only one vent, which is a crosswise slit that serves the use of bowels, kidneys and sex. The males have two sex organs in this vent, but only one is used at a time. All our three snakes produce eggs, soft membranous things, but the actual process of birth differs in each of our three species. The grass-snake lays its eggs in some heap of decaying vegetation or perhaps in a manure heap and leaves them to hatch: in the case of the smooth snake the egg membrane breaks at the moment of birth: in the case of the viper the membrane is broken just before extrusion and the young are born alive. In all three species no attention whatever is paid to the young, who are born able to look after themselves and immediately go off by themselves. In the case of young vipers, they show some eagerness to do so, being anxious to put as great a distance between themselves and their parent as possible in the shortest time possible, since the female viper is a creature of uncertain temperament and large appetite.

There is a story that the female viper, when danger threatens her young, will open her mouth into which the young will jump to be swallowed, and that when the danger is over she will open her mouth again and out will come the young vipers unharmed. It is a story that is widely believed, and you may even meet men who

will swear that they have actually witnessed such an incident. It is, of course, an optical delusion. Quite apart from the fact that no female viper would recognise its young, quite apart from the fact that no young viper would be so foolish as to remain in close proximity to mother, quit apart from these and many other very good reasons why such a thing could not happen, there is the question of time. A female viper at her first motherhood produces five or more young, the number increases with her size and she may produce as many as twenty. The time taken to swallow even five would be too long for the safety of the family or the parent. And if this is not sufficient to disprove the legend, consider the description of the snake's mouth and swallowing apparatus given above and think what would in fact happen to the young. Young vipers, I fancy, have just as rooted an objection to committing suicide as young humans.

Vipers are subject to extreme variation, both in size and colour, so much so in fact that after many years of fairly intimate experience I should hesitate to define a typical viper. Females are commonly said to be longer than males. It is true that long vipers are almost always females—the longest yet recorded in Britain, a positive giant of 35 inches, was a female—and it would probably be true to say that a viper of 26 inches or more is a female. Taking an average through a long series females are undoubtedly longer than males. But in the field one does not see a long series, and it does not follow that the longer of a pair is always the female. Not many vipers exceed 24 inches and most are 22 inches or less. I have known females of 20 inches and males of 22 inches to consort together, and I have known a male of 25 inches, a bigger beast than most of the females I have known. But if length is not a very safe guide to sex, it is, I think, true to say that the female is always stouter than the male. A female of 20 inches will be stouter than a male of the same length, even than a male of 21 inches and probably than a male of 22 inches. And the females are always more sluggish than the males.

Variation in colour is even more extreme—a point that is not sufficiently stressed in the books. Indeed the books suggest that on the whole all vipers are much alike and that all have a prominent dark zig-zag line down the back, by which marking they may be known at once. This is not so. The zig-zag is usually, but not

always, present, but it is by no means always prominent and is not always recognisable at a glance. And vipers, so far as colour, is concerned, are most certainly not much alike. I have known (and I am writing only of Hampshire) a number of black vipers of both sexes—there is one spot in the New Forest near Puck Pits where on most suitable days you may rely on seeing a black viper or even, if you are in luck, several at once—and I have seen a male (also in the New Forest) that was as nearly white as could be. Between these extremes you will find brown, golden, brick-red, gray, olive, violet, blue and fawn; and the depth and consistency of the markings also varies enormously. In general, I think, but I would not be dogmatic about it, the males have the brighter colouring and the darker markings. Another point about colouring that the books do not stress (in fact most of them do not mention it at all) is that the underparts are quite often different in colour from the upper parts, and sometimes much more brilliant. W. H. Hudson is the only author I know who has really brought this point out, and he mentions it only once. Hudson watched and handled most of his vipers in the New Forest and he mentions particularly a golden female with a pronounced black zig-zag whose belly was brilliantly blue: a striking combination, but one which he did not consider uncommon though few were quite so brilliantly blue as this particular female. Blue of varying shades is, in my experience, the most common colour for the underparts when the ground colour of the upper parts is different, but I have also found green, pink, black and yellow. The colour of the underparts fades very rapidly after death and to see it properly you must lift the living animal up by the tail and hold it away from you. Can this be why the books do not mention it?

We commonly associate snakes, and especially poisonous snakes, with tropical climates. This has given rise to the quite erroneous idea that the viper loves the hot sun and is, with rare exceptions, to be seen only when the sun is hot. Probably the fact that the viper hibernates has leant added weight to this idea. However that may be it is widely, indeed commonly, held. A viper seen in February or early March is considered sufficiently extraordinary to be worth a letter to the Press every time it happens—which is every year! Actually the viper dislikes a hot sun as heartily as it dislikes a cold wet day, and it will take shelter from a hot sun as

eagerly as from rain. It is a creature that loves moderate warmth. A short survey of its distribution is sufficient to prove the truth of this assertion. Our viper is found throughout northern Europe even to the sixty-seventh degree of latitude. In the far north of its range it is found at sea level, but in the south, where the climate is warmer, it is found as a rule only in the hills. In southern Germany it is rare to find it below 1000 feet, while in Switzerland it is rarely below 2500 feet but may be found from that elevation to more than 9000 feet. Further south it simply does not occur. And when in the southern part of its range it does occur at a low altitude—and this is most uncommon—it will always be found that there are factors present to counter-balance the greater heat. This dislike of real heat holds good for the vipers of Britain. You will not see a viper on a really hot summer's day: on the other hand you will see them on the warm days of early spring. February, so far from being unusual, is the month in which the vipers of the Isle of Wight normally leave hibernation. Early March, given a few day of sunshine, is the normal month for leaving hibernation in the New Forest. Being a hill snake the viper throughout the greater part of its range is accustomed to snow, and it is not realised in this country how very fond of the combination of snow and sunshine it is. Snow on the ground and a bright sun overhead are quite irresistible to English vipers, and on such a day in February or March, if I am in suitable country, I expect to see vipers basking and am rarely disappointed. They love to find a stone or some patch of ground clear of snow and to lie and dream in the sun, and they will cross snow and burrow into snow without hesitation, and, indeed, with obvious enjoyment. Rain is another matter. The grass-snake has a definite fondness for water, the viper a definite loathing. It will always shelter from rain, always endeavour to avoid sodden ground, never enter water unless compelled to do so. And yet it is a thirsty creature. It will go to water to drink (in one garden of mine, one of my bird baths, an old Cotswold stone sink, placed in the ground but not flush to the ground, was a favourite drinking place for the vipers of the neighbourhood) and they will drink from dock leaves after rain and even from puddles in the roadway.

Vipers are mainly nocturnal. In the daytime they lie up in holes or in thick cover, or spend the time basking in the sun. They



have favourite basking spots, and if you find a snake basking you may be fairly sure that you will find it or another in the same spot on any suitable day. A favourite basking-lie is never deserted for long, and seems to be as jealously sought after as a favourite station in a trout stream is sought by trout. But the real business of living, which is the capture of food, begins for the viper at dusk. The chief prey is made up of small mammals—mice, voles, shrews and the like—and small birds. The victim is paralysed by the bite and is swallowed whole. If this sort of food is not readily obtainable lizards, frogs, toads, slow-worms, newts and even caterpillars and other insect larvae are taken. It is often said that the viper does not climb trees. It is quite true that it is not an habitual tree climber like the grass-snake, but it will climb trees on occasion. The occasion is usually the presence of a nest of young birds. No doubt vipers do take eggs—all the books say so anyway—but it is not an egg-eater in the sense that the grass-snake is. The latter climbs trees for nests of eggs, but, though I have no proof to offer in support of my contention and though I am well aware that individual vipers will vary in their tastes, I do not believe that the viper climbs trees for this purpose. No doubt it would not pass by a nest of eggs, but it likes, I fancy, more substantial food and would be far more likely to await the return of the parent bird. A viper's hunting is not a haphazard affair. Each one has a definite territory which it beats in a regular manner in search of food, and some individuals will cover considerable distances during the course of a night, returning at daybreak or when the light strengthens, to their chosen spot for lying-up. This is not guess-work. It is comparatively easy of proof, provided that a little trouble is taken. Both the grass-snake and the smooth snake are immune to viper's poison. I do not know about the latter, which is a small but powerful reptile (I have had smooth snakes in captivity), but the former will on occasion eat vipers that are not fully grown or too large. They begin at the tail and go on until there is no more. The grass-snake, however, cannot be considered an enemy of the viper. The chief enemy is man. Man—he should not be proud of it—kills at sight, and rarely bothers to find out if the animal he is killing is a viper or not. All snakes in the eyes of most men are dangerous. The next most dangerous enemy is the hedgehog. Hedgehogs are not immune to viper's poison, but they

are adept at killing snakes and are very rarely bitten. Their method is interesting: they bite the tail and then roll up, allowing the snake to kill itself on their spines. After the hedgehog comes, I should say, domestic poultry. The ordinary barn-door fowl, cock or hen, is extremely skilful in killing snakes. Some years ago when I was working a poultry farm in viper country I watched a Rhode Island Red hen kill a viper that got into the run. The hen jumped in the manner of a cock fighting, landing on the snake and pecking behind the head at the same time. The process was repeated some half-dozen times and the snake was dead. I found a number of vipers and grass-snakes killed by the poultry, and did not have a single fatality among the birds. Other birds, I believe, will also kill vipers. On the other hand there have been one or two records of birds—in one case a rook, in another a kestrel—killed by them. Goats kill them by stamping, and cats have also been known to do so. I have no record of goats being killed by them, but cats have been recorded as dying from viper bites. Dogs, foxes, badgers, stoats and weasels seem to avoid them whenever possible, but some dogs seem impelled to investigate vipers too closely and as a result get bitten, sometimes with fatal results. It is often said that sheep and even cattle are killed by vipers. I have been unable to verify a single instance of this, and I have little doubt that the accusations are based not on fact but on fear. No doubt sheep and cattle are occasionally bitten—for example, when they inadvertently tread on a basking snake—but neither the sheep nor the cow is clumsy in this way: both, indeed, tread warily and delicately when feeding.

I have mentioned "viper country," but I am not at all sure that it would be possible to define such country accurately. The New Forest is viper country and so is Dartmoor Forest, but it would be most unwise to regard either as typical of the sort of ground that vipers frequent. In general they are to be found most frequently, I think, on heath land and rough common. But the thick hedgerows of Hampshire are favourite resorts, especially the hedge bottoms along the lower slopes of the downs. They may also be found on the very tops of the downs—there is a particularly good place outside Winchester—and in ordinary meadow land. Waste land, even when in or near towns, is also inhabited on occasion. I once was brought a viper that had been killed on a

slag heap at Coalville in Leicestershire. Altogether I do not think the viper is so particular as the grass-snake.

Hibernation is sometimes undertaken in colonies of considerable size, and I am inclined to doubt if in the wild it is ever undertaken singly. Some of these colonial hibernacula have, I imagine, been used for many years and the inhabitants return to them from considerable distances. I have personal knowledge of two in Hampshire: one not far from Holmesley Station and the other in the Cheriton neighbourhood. I have spent hours in the spring watching these two, but chiefly the one near Holmesley which I have known for at least twenty years. Vipers mate in the spring, not very long after emerging from the winter sleep. In the New Forest mating occurs, as a rule, during the last week in March and the first week of April (young in the New Forest are usually born in August which gives a four months' gestation), and it is at this time that a visit to a known resort of the snakes is very well worth while.

During the mating season there is a certain amount of competition between the males for particular females, but the females never show the slightest concern as to which male bestows his favours upon them. The females at this time lie out in suitable spots, never far from a hole, and bask, and the males move about among them. I have watched a smallish male paying court to a large female, lying alongside her and playing his small black tongue in light flickering caresses all over her body—this is the invariable prelude to mating—when a much larger male appeared. So soon as he saw the other two he stopped, then after a moment approached more closely, stopped again, drawing back his head to strike. At this moment the small male became aware of him, and was gone so quickly that I could not follow the movement. Whereupon the large male glided up to the female and commenced to caress in just the same manner, the female accepting the change with, so far as a human could see, complete indifference. In due course the tails linked, and, the male moving the whole length of his body gently against that of the female, mating was accomplished.

On another occasion while a large male was caressing a comparatively small female another male, a little smaller, appeared and made straight for the courting couple. In a flash the female

was alone, and the one male was racing after the other towards a hole in the bank some yards away. This is the only occasion on which I have seen vipers moving at top speed and it was with interest that I noticed that the head, and an appreciable length of the body, was held clear of the ground. They moved at a quite amazing pace, and shot down the hole one after another. After a few seconds the original large male reappeared and returned immediately to the female. She had, however, moved a little away to make room for another and much larger female. With the newcomer the male was most cautious, and after one or two tentative caresses moved away, came upon the original female from whom he had been driven and in due course mating was accomplished. I stayed for another two hours watching the big female as she lay coiled in the sun. During this time three males approached her, each very cautiously. As each came up she appeared absolutely indifferent, accepted the few tentative caresses with absolute indifference, but as each moved away she turned her head sharply after them. Finally, she uncoiled, glided unconcernedly past me and disappeared down a hole. The following afternoon in exactly the same spot I watched her mating with one of the males that had visited her the previous day.

Vipers are not savage creatures, and they do not attack man on sight. Nor are they short-tempered and apt to strike at the slightest provocation. They will always avoid man and trouble if they possibly can, and almost always they will give warning that they may have to strike, if conditions do not improve, by hissing. In fact, I have found them to be gentle and inoffensive creatures so long as they are treated with proper consideration. It must not be thought that I am suggesting that the viper is harmless: far from it. But I am suggesting that the fear with which it is widely regarded reflects little credit on man. The viper is not a creature that one can take liberties with, its bite is not a thing to be disregarded, but, provided consideration is shown, vipers are not dangerous.

I have handled many vipers, with and without gloves. I have picked them up by the tails in the open—you do not want to hold them by the tail for long—and I have picked them up by the neck in the open. I have had vipers in captivity and out of cages. I have had them basking on my hand—the human hand is warm and warmth is the way to the viper's heart—and I have had them

coiled around my neck and crawling here and there about me as I have sat in a chair reading a book. I have even teased a viper and been astonished at the amount of teasing it would stand before it struck at my heavily-gloved hand. I do not know how many vipers I have handled, a considerable number, and I have only been bitten twice. The first time on the little finger of my left hand and the second time on the thumb of my right hand. The first bite occasioned me some discomfort. To be honest, I was extremely frightened, and made a large cut in the finger with my knife, sucked the wound and generally behaved in the approved Red Indian-cum-Boy Scout manner. I was sixteen years old at the time and was convinced that I was going to die. As I was some miles from anywhere I sat on the ground and resigned myself to this, feeling frightened and heroic. As nothing happened at all I walked the five miles or so home. I had a headache for a day or so, and the finger (owing entirely to my own misguided efforts, I have a large scar to this day) was painful for a long while—beyond that nothing. The second occasion was four years ago. By this time I had learned that whisky was a good thing to drink when bitten by a viper, so I drank quite a lot. I cannot say that I felt anything at all, beyond a slight headache—and that might have been the whisky. That has been my experience of viper bites. On the other hand a friend of mine who was bitten above the ankle was seriously ill for three weeks (he was an apparently strong man of forty): a girl I know was bitten in the thumb and was dangerously ill for four days and ill for a month: and a boy of thirteen I know was bitten and died the day after. A good deal, I fancy, must depend upon one's physical condition at the time of being bitten. Very few people in Britain die as the result of being bitten: in France about eight per cent. of bites are fatal. No explanation so far as I know has been given for the difference. French vipers are not, in my experience, any more difficult to handle.

The viper is not easy to keep in captivity. Its first reaction to being captured is to disgorge its last meal, and it will generally refuse to eat in captivity, and will ultimately die of starvation. I should not recommend anyone to keep a viper for more than three weeks. During that time it should become very tame, but if it will not accept food then it should be released. To begin with it should always be handled with heavy gloves (I do not always

practise what I preach, but the advise is sound), but, once it is used to one, gloves may be discarded and provided sudden movements are avoided there is little risk of being bitten. Both my bites were my own fault: one was from a snake in the open, the second from a captive, and both struck in response to sudden movement on my part. If a captive will take food—this has only happened once in my own case—it should be fed once a week. I think some fail to feed because they are given dead food, but even live mice will not tempt the majority of the vipers I have known. If they will feed, however, the food should be presented to them alive. This may sound cruel, but is not. Certainly less cruel than allowing the snake to die of starvation. Never try to feed a snake forcibly. A snake's mouth is delicate and easily injured.

I have not made a detailed study of the distribution of vipers within our boundaries for the simple reason that the animal occurs almost everywhere in Hampshire. It would probably be easier to detail the places in which it is not known to occur. Probably it will be said by many who read this paper, "Well, I never see a viper around here." Of course, the density of population varies from place to place and all Hampshire is not so plentifully supplied as the New Forest, the stretch of country between Alresford and Exton, the area along the Berkshire border by Silchester, or the ground between Chawton Park Wood and the railway, but I am convinced that the number of places in the country—excluding marshy or permanently wet areas—where it is not known to occur at all is very limited. They are not as thick on the ground as sparrows, but they are very far from being uncommon. Nor is it difficult to prove whether or no you have adders with you. Choose what you think would be a likely spot, choose a night in summer, and light a fire. If there are vipers in the neighbourhood they will almost certainly come to the fire, and may be easily secured. I have noticed this on more than one occasion when I have been with Gypsies.

SHIPPING IN PEACE AND WAR

by CUTHBERT MAUGHAN

IT WAS on a diminished and impoverished British mercantile marine that this country had to rely for existence when war broke out in 1939. A Bill which was to extend to shipping assistance of a most comprehensive kind was stopped in its progress through the House of Commons by the declaration of war. For the next six eventful years the mercantile marine was to transport the men, carry the foodstuffs and war supplies to the scenes of fighting, and share actively in great naval and military operations, besides largely provisioning these islands—all vital services which made victory possible. It is now beginning to emerge from its war-time ordeals and strict control in something like half its previous volume. Important new tasks await it as soon as the ships have been refitted for the big parts they have to take in peace-time commerce. Time will show if history is to be repeated and difficulties will encompass shipping again, as they did in the years between the wars, or if a new era of service and prosperity is opening for the greatest of all British industries.

During the war of 1914–18 the British people showed proper appreciation of the mercantile marine. Immediately afterwards men of the merchant service were accorded places of honour with representatives of the fighting services at public celebrations of peace and, as an expression of gratitude for and recognition of work well done, a pageant of the mercantile marine in the Thames was organised and was witnessed by large crowds drawn from London's dense population. A procession of ships' boats

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manned by crews who had faced the horrors of war at sea and flying the house flags of the various companies passed up the river and below the windows and terraces of the Houses of Parliament. Tributes were publicly paid to the magnificent performances of British shipping and the courage of seamen in the face of unprecedented dangers from submarines and (at that time), to a smaller extent, from aircraft.

All this was well deserved and was worthy of the nation. Yet the appreciation which was apparent while danger threatened and for some time afterwards did not save the British shipping industry from falling within a few years on extremely hard times. Ships went to sea fully manned by men with masters' certificates, for not sufficient commands were available for all who were qualified. Thousands of seamen tried to gain employment in industry ashore or, relying on the dole for support, trudged the streets; hundreds of ships were laid up in estuaries round the coasts; shipyards languished for work; skilled craftsmen became tram conductors and were glad to earn a living by any honest means, for the shipbuilding companies, starved of naval orders and dependent on the building of passenger liners and other specialised vessels, could only offer work to a fraction of the number of men who sought it; shareholders in shipping companies went without dividends for years. Time passed, and when in Britain's second emergency the shipyards again wanted men these were not to be had. Untrained women tried bravely to fill some of the gaps.

While depression ruled in the United Kingdom much financial encouragement was being given by other Governments to the growth of their national mercantile marines. This helped materially to aggravate the trouble in this country. Foreign governments acted directly by subsidising shipbuilding and shipping companies; and indirectly by devious methods which secured that traffic would be diverted to particular fleets. Barter schemes were introduced whereby industries which, by furnishing products, had obtained financial credits were only permitted to make use of these for the purchase of other goods, including ships. Italy paid for dried fish with tonnage, so that a vessel was built in Italy for Norwegian owners to maintain a passenger and cargo service between England and Norway. British shipping had to meet un-



aided heavily supported foreign competition, with the immediate result that foreign mercantile marines expanded while the British industry declined. It also encountered severe competition from mercantile marines of countries with lower standards of living. That from Greek shipping, for example, was intensified by the practice of several members of a family helping to man a ship and, when freights were low, being prepared to accept little remuneration in the hope that there would be compensation in better times. In the Eastern trades Japanese vessels, with the assistance of the Government and of low expenses, made large inroads into the trade of British companies. These few illustrations of the difficulties British shipping companies encountered are briefly recalled as a warning of the kind of thing which may happen again and lead once more to the undoing of the British mercantile marine. Quite different dangers may also assail it. There are already signs that other countries are caring more for their shipping industries. A third time British shipping might not be strong enough to save these islands when gravely endangered, and other good reasons also exist why a healthy shipping industry is essential to the welfare of Britain.

Before attempting to look ahead it will be well shortly to consider the state in which British shipping ended the great wars in Europe and the Far East. For six years no information was disclosed to the public. News of losses was confined outside official circles to those directly concerned, notably owners and marine underwriters, and was only made known to these for the purpose of their work and on a promise of absolute secrecy. Including shipping owned in the British Dominions overseas, Lloyd's Register showed that in June 1939 there were 8,977 steamships and motorships of 21,002,000 tons gross. The Admiralty has reported that from the outbreak of war to May 8, 1945, there were lost 2,570 vessels, of 11,380,000 tons. In addition, 610 vessels of 1,120,000 tons, were lost through marine perils, making a total of 12,500,000 tons, which was more than half the tonnage with which the British nations started the war. Against this great decline British shipyards produced during the war about 6,000,000 tons gross of new ships, much of which was of standard types and by no means entirely suitable for peace-time service. Measured by tonnage the British mercantile marine at the end of hostilities was

less by about 7,000,000 tons gross, but tonnage alone does not indicate the full extent of the change. The losses of fast passenger and cargo liners may mean much more than the destruction of a similar volume of ordinary cargo tonnage.

Not until almost the end of the hostilities were companies allowed to announce the names of ships which were no more, and then the public gained some idea of the price which had been paid by shipping for doing finely the work entrusted to it. As a rule, the knowledge of the public of individual ships is restricted to a few passenger vessels, especially those directed to pleasure cruising during the years before the war, and it transpired that some of the best-known ships had disappeared. These, like other valuable assets of the country, were not spared where great risks were involved. They were placed in the forefront of the battle. If war should ever come again such ships may be guarded from the outset by warships, as they deserve to be. Once more many fine liners were withdrawn from performing their true functions of carrying passengers and cargo and were commissioned to act as auxiliary cruisers and were employed in patrolling duties and as escorts for other merchant vessels. With their many decks they made large targets and when they encountered heavily armed enemy warships their doom was quickly sealed.

The P. & O. announced the losses of, among many ships, the 'Viceroy of India,' 'Narkunda,' and 'Strathallan,' and the Orient Line the destruction of the 'Orcades.' The 'Strathallan' and 'Orcades,' each of about 24,000 tons gross, built for comfortable travel between England and Australia, were two of the latest ships, and their destruction indicated how chance was a factor in the end of fine craft. While many of the most modern liners which should have had long lives of service ahead of them were destroyed, some of the older vessels, whose years had already seemed numbered, survived. Notable among such ships which were able to render splendid service from the beginning to the end of the war were the liners 'Atlantis' and 'Almanzora,' built in 1913 and 1914 respectively. In the event they were given a new lease of life which was to be most valuable to the country. So, indeed, was the service of every British ship which was seaworthy. Lest by the mention of two names Royal Mail Lines, the owners of the two 'A' ships, should be associated quite unfairly

with older vessels, it is right to recall that their newest and splendid ship the 'Andes,' of 26,000 tons gross, was about to make her maiden voyage from Southampton to South America when war broke out. Instead, she was stripped of all her luxurious passenger fittings and converted into a transport, and in that capacity has carried many thousands of men to and from all parts of the world. Royal Mail Lines, Limited, have also been outstanding in contracting for new tonnage during the war. The Blue Star liner 'Arandora Star,' for many years employed in pleasure cruising, was another of the well-known ships to be lost. The 'Empress of Britain,' of 42,000 tons, the flagship of the Canadian Pacific Company, which had made long world cruises during the winter months in the years of peace, was destroyed, together with other large passenger ships and the whole of the fleet of 'Beaver' cargo liners which were specially built for the trade between London and Montreal. Ships of the passenger-liner class were irreplaceable during war-time, owing to the larger amount of labour needed for their construction and the length of time required. The destruction of many such vessels increased the strain on those remaining—marine engines like human beings need rest at times—and they were missed not only during the war but also later when, hostilities over, millions of troops wanted to return home in the shortest possible time.

Since individual liner fleets differed widely in numbers and size of the units the extent of the losses likewise varied greatly, but every liner company ended the war in the position of having to replace a considerable proportion of its fleet. Losses naturally only represent one side of the account where national service is concerned. On the credit side ships before they were sunk rendered magnificent service and those which were fortunate enough to survive contributed still more to the war effort. As illustrating the cost of participation in naval and military duties five large P. & O. liners were lost in operations connected with the invasion of the North African coast in the autumn of 1942. They included, besides those already named, the 'Cathay' and 'Ettrick'; and as the troops carried in each vessel had been safely landed at their appointed places and the ships were destroyed when homeward bound, happily there was little loss of life. The P. & O. liner 'Rawalpindi,' specially built, like the company's other vessels, for

Eastern trade, was sunk early in the war while commissioned as an armed merchant cruiser and engaged in patrolling duties in the North. When this lightly armed passenger liner, performing a naval task, encountered a heavily armed German cruiser she had no chance of survival. The loss of the 'Jervis Bay,' of the Aberdeen and Commonwealth Line, when escorting a North Atlantic convoy was another instance of a vessel unsuited to the war duties she was called on to perform. Her captain sacrificed the ship's company and the vessel when a German cruiser appeared and by his heroic action enabled ships in the convoy to escape.

Outstanding among all merchant ships for their size and speed were the 'Queen Mary' and 'Queen Elizabeth,' of 81,000 and 85,000 tons gross respectively, belonging to Cunard White Star. Many years before the war discussion raged around the building of the 'Queen Mary.' For a time when deep depression enveloped shipping and shipbuilding, construction of the ship was stopped, and it was resumed partly with the purpose of providing much-needed work for the builders. She was completed in 1936 and proved so successful that contracts were made for the building of a sister ship, to be slightly larger than the 'Queen Mary' and to be capable of carrying out the conception of the Cunard White Star directors of a weekly service between Southampton and New York maintained by two great ships alone. When war broke out it was feared in responsible quarters that the ships, owing to their exceptional size, would prove white elephants. Later one of the present Cabinet Ministers said as much publicly in the House of Commons. The 'Queen Mary' remained for some time in dock at New York and the 'Queen Elizabeth' uncompleted at her builders, John Brown and Company, at Clydebank. Then the idea was accepted that there were great possibilities in the ships as transports and the 'Queen Mary' was sent to Australia and Singapore to be prepared for such work. She returned to Egypt laden with troops. There then began wonderful work by the vessel, first in Eastern waters and, later, in the North Atlantic in bringing American troops to Europe to the number of 15,000 at a time. The use of the 'Queen Elizabeth' started in a curious way, since she was in the fitting-out basin at Clydebank on the outbreak of war and work was promptly stopped. Later the Admiralty gave

orders that she was to be moved out of the country. So she was hurriedly sent to sea in a half-finished state. Although her departure from the Clyde was seen by thousands of local residents and there was an unusually large concentration of German bombers off the coast, the first news the world had that the ship had left her builders was that she had arrived at New York. So the largest liner ever to have been built crossed the Atlantic at a speed of 28 knots without undergoing any of the preliminary trials in sheltered waters which have always been customary before the commissioning of new ships, a remarkable testimony to the work of her builders. Subsequently a great partnership between the two Queens was instituted. They have carried scores of thousands more passengers during the last six and a half years than even the most optimistic thought they would ever transport, and they did so in conditions very different from those envisaged when the ships were designed. Luxurious fittings were torn out of the hulls, and the accommodation, like the catering arrangements, became austere. Instead of the palates of passengers being tempted from early morning until late at night with attractive meals and refreshments, the work of highly skilled cooks, meals in the ships were restricted to two a day. Decks were used strictly for exercise under military supervision while the vessels, relying for safety mainly on their speed, rushed across the Atlantic laden with their human freight.

Sir Percy Bates, the Chairman of Cunard White Star, was able to report at the meeting last year that down to May 31, 1945, the two ships had carried during the war years 1,244,000 passengers, and that of these 870,000 troops were carried eastbound across the Atlantic and 213,000 westbound, making a total of 1,083,000. He liked to believe that these two vessels shortened the war in Europe by a whole year. There were two periods when their services were of exceptional significance. One was when the British armies were being hard pressed by the Germans on the Egyptian frontier. Reinforcements were urgently needed, and when the British ships brought them the tables were turned and the rout of the German invaders began. The second time was when preparations for the invasion of the Normandy coast were well advanced and it was known that the word to begin the great adventure awaited the arrival of American troops in numbers

deemed sufficient for the purpose. When the wars ended, the ships without rest began the task of helping to return millions of men to their homes.

Although the names of these two ships have become familiar to the public, fine work has also been done by other units of the fleet. Probably no greater service has ever been rendered to the country by any vessel than by the 'Aquitania,' of 46,000 tons gross. Built in 1914, she was first an armed cruiser, then a hospital ship, and, later, a transport during the war which immediately followed; she was then one of the principal and most popular liners in the North Atlantic during the period between the two wars; and she was again commissioned in the recent struggle. She did not equal in speed the performance of the first 'Mauretania,' but she must have proved the most profitable vessel ever built for her original owners, the Cunard Steamship Company, by which she was transferred later to Cunard White Star. Although her services in the recent wars were probably more valuable she was then remunerated at only a fraction of the rate in 1914-18, probably because of her advanced years.

Fortunately a great scheme of rebuilding and re-engining was carried through by the Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company in the years immediately preceding 1939. This programme was undertaken to enable the fleet to maintain a faster weekly service between England and South Africa, but during the recent wars the ships were directed to other duties, and during the war years and since then they have appeared, like other liners, in many ports throughout the world. Of its mail vessels the company lost the 'Warwick Castle' and 'Windsor Castle,' and a number of other and new refrigerator ships which had been specially built for the carriage of fruit from South Africa. These were employed during hostilities in carrying cargoes of meat to and from North and South America and the Mediterranean and Northern Europe, including the United Kingdom. Since vessels specially designed for the transport of bananas were commissioned as merchant cruisers it is obvious that liners of all types were employed in duties never foreseen when they were built. Ships specially constructed for cold North Atlantic voyages were sent through the Tropics to the East and ships designed for fine-weather voyages in southern waters were directed to boisterous northern latitudes.

Such things were done because the need for tonnage was so urgent that whatever vessels could be spared for particular purposes had to be pressed into the service. Passenger ships were brought home from Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East because at the time of the Normandy invasion every ship that could be made available was urgently needed for duties nearer home.

Before referring to the problems involved in replacing the many liners lost, an idea may be given of the effect of the war on ordinary cargo ships. Some facts concerning the havoc wrought among cargo fleets were disclosed by Sir Philip Haldin on resigning the chairmanship of the Deep Sea Tramp Section of the Chamber of Shipping, which he had held throughout the war. He pointed out that the experience of the earlier war had caused owners to foresee something of what might be expected from submarine warfare, but he doubted if any had realised that the damage would be so severe and widespread. By the end of the war nearly 75 per cent. of the deep-sea tramps owned at the beginning had been sunk. In 1938 there were 750 deep-sea tramps on the United Kingdom and Colonial registers. Down to the end of 1940, 179 had been lost; 150 more were sunk in 1941; in 1942 the number destroyed was 151; and in 1943 it was 60. At one time almost one ship every day was being lost. Not until the spring of 1943 did matters really improve. Even so, 26 more ships were sunk by the end of the war, making a total of 571.

Part of the losses were made good by private construction and by the purchase of tonnage built for Government account. Yet it was estimated that at the end of last year the number of tramp ships privately owned was about 400 fewer than in 1939. Some Government-owned vessels offered to owners under an earlier scheme for partial replacement of losses were not bought for deferred delivery, and a second disposal scheme was issued at the end of last January under which, *inter alia*, deep-sea tramp ships were offered to the industry for purchase or charter, and a further batch of Canadian vessels for charter only.

The attitude of managers of passenger and cargo liners towards replacement differs from that of managers of ordinary cargo or tramp vessels. The liner companies have regular services of specialised ships for which to provide, whether they are mainly concerned with the transport of passengers or cargo. These services

were interrupted by the war and managers have been concerned to resume them at the earliest moment. Many of the shippers of cargo were unable during the war to export goods and they also need to restart their trades as soon as practicable. These exporters look to the regular lines to carry their cargo. The Ministry of War Transport have appreciated the importance of the re-establishment of the services and they have allotted vessels to the different routes as these could be spared. It has happened that during the last few months cargo liner companies have been loading in their trades vessels other than their own because their own ships were engaged on Government service.

In making their plans for replacement, passenger liner managements cannot fail to be influenced by the present level of costs, which, broadly, is twice that of the years immediately preceding the war. Exact comparisons depend on the year before the war which is taken as a standard, since prices then varied considerably. When war threatened and once again naval construction became significant they began to rise. The problem of costs is serious because no provision was made for such a sharp increase in these charges either in the earning of ships before or during the war. It is customary in peace-time for owners to aim at earnings which will allow provision to be made each year for depreciation of the ships and for interest on the capital represented. The allowance aimed at for depreciation is such that when accumulated it should provide sufficient funds at the end of a ship's normal life to replace her. This provision assumes, however, that building costs remain fairly steady, and if these are doubled the allowance for depreciation only meets half the cost. No allowance for increased costs of construction was made in the terms of requisitioning agreed between the Government and the shipping industry early in the war. Limits were also placed on the amounts which could be insured against war risks with a view to checking the inevitable rise in shipping values. So it happens that large liner companies, which show considerable liquid resources in their balance-sheets, the results of payments for vessels lost, have sufficient resources only to provide for the replacement of parts of their fleets.

When contracting for new passenger liners managements have to try to foresee the conditions which will rule years ahead. First there is the question whether passage rates and freight rates which



enabled, or should have permitted, depreciation and interest to be earned before the war would be adequate when these standing charges, because of higher costs of construction, will be so much higher. They have therefore to consider if passengers will be able to pay such fares as would provide accommodation comparable with that offered before the war. If the prospect of their being able to do so is unpromising, then some partial relief may be sought in simpler accommodation. Then there is the degree to which sea travel may be affected by air services, and on this question only opinions can be formed. The view is widely held in the shipping industry that where speed is the primary influence passengers will choose the air, but where other factors count sea travel will be able to hold its own. A particularly optimistic view is that in the course of time sea travel may well benefit by the greater use of air services since the total volume of travel should expand. This conclusion rests on the reasoning that many who might be unable to spare the time for a sea passage each way would be able to contemplate a visit to another part of the world if either the outward or return passage could be made quickly by air. For such reasons sea and air transport are regarded as being complementary to each other.

The shipping lines have shown their readiness to take to the air, and the proposals of the late Government accorded them a place in civil aviation. Consequently the decision of the present Government that air services should be nationalised has been regretted in the shipping industry. The passenger shipping companies serving South America have been particularly active in air developments and formed British South American Airways Limited. It was under the auspices of this company that the Starlight, a Lancastrian aeroplane, inaugurated a service at the beginning of this year between this country and South America. She was captained for the flight by Air Vice-Marshal D. C. T. Bennett, former chief of the R.A.F. Pathfinder Force, who last year joined the technical staff of the enterprise. The departure of the aircraft from Heathrow, the new London airport, was witnessed by the Minister of Civil Aviation, who was accompanied by his Parliamentary Secretary and the Director-General of Civil Aviation. The Starlight made the passage to Buenos Aires by way of Lisbon, Bathurst, Natal (Brazil), Rio de Janeiro, and Monte-

video, and was followed a few weeks later by the Stardust on a similar proving flight. The shipping companies before the end of the war had urged the need of a British air service and were ready to employ their organisation at home and abroad for the development of air as well as of sea transport. The late Government held that these companies were best fitted to conduct the new enterprise.

So far the liner companies in making a start with rebuilding have contracted mostly for larger and faster vessels than the ships they replace. Size and speed are connected, for in order that ships fitted with more powerful engines may be as economical as less powerful ships greater length may be needed. As the faster vessels will be able to cover a larger mileage during a given period fewer vessels should be needed to provide accommodation for the same number of passengers as was available in the past. Consequently until the volume of traffic expands there may be fewer sailings, but more passengers will be carried in each vessel. As precisely comparable ships would cost twice as much as before the war the outlay on each individual vessel will be still more. Exceptionally the Union-Castle Company has contracted for two rather larger vessels, than the mail ships it lost during the war, and has done so with a view to maintaining a fleet which will be able to provide a weekly mail service between the United Kingdom and South Africa, in accordance with the terms of a new ten-year-mail contract entered into with the Union Government to take effect from January 1, 1947.

Owners of cargo tonnage, as a rule, have proceeded cautiously with rebuilding plans. It is not surprising that the future for ordinary cargo vessels should be regarded as uncertain as long as there is doubt about the disposal of the immense volume of American tonnage built during the war. In June 1939 the United States, according to Lloyd's Register, owned 8,910,000 tons gross of ocean-going shipping. To-day the sea-going shipping owned amounts to about 55,000,000 tons deadweight, equivalent to about 37,000,000 tons gross. In the United States the custom is to refer to deadweight tonnage, which represents the total carrying capacity of ships in tons of 20 cwt., whereas in this country the capacities in statistics are usually given in gross tonnage, being the internal cubic capacity of the ships in tons of 100 cubic feet.

A rough method of conversion is that three tons deadweight are the equivalent of two tons gross in measurement.

Of the great American production due to the magnificent shipbuilding effort of the war it is proposed that only a proportion should be employed by the United States in peace-time. A Bill which was lately before the United States Senate proposed that between 15,000,000 and 20,000,000 tons deadweight, equivalent to between 10,000,000 and 13,000,000 tons gross, should be retained in service, including coastwise trades, and that half should be employed in oversea commerce. Various recommendations have been advanced by different speakers for determining the future of the United States war-built shipping. These mostly have included the treatment of a substantial proportion as a reserve to be held for use only in national emergency. The proposals have agreed that the vessels to be retained in service should be the faster and larger ships, and these, it has been suggested, should be disposed of to operators at well below cost price. The future of the ships loaned to other countries has remained in doubt.

The uncertainty respecting the future of the American tonnage, although of immense importance to all the maritime nations, does not affect the simple fact that for this country a large and efficient mercantile marine is vital. This will be more important even than before the war because of the change of the relationship between Britain and other countries consequent on the disposal in the war effort of many of her oversea assets, which yielded income and helped to span the difference between the cost of essential imports and the lower value of direct exports. In 1937 the value of the shipping services rendered by this country to others was estimated at £115,000,000 and in 1938 at £90,000,000. Such earnings placed shipping first among the export industries. The country has been repeatedly warned recently that its exports must be largely expanded in future in order to offset the losses of overseas investments. It has no alternative, therefore, to seeking not only to re-establish its shipping services but also to develop them. This will not be achieved by the possession of ships alone. It is at least as important that the merchant fleet should be remuneratively employed, and this must depend on the enterprise of managers in discovering and making full use of opportunities. Happily this need for the exercise of individual initiative has been

recognised by the Government, which has professed its desire that the ships should be returned to the control of the managements at the earliest moment, while it must be the concern of the Government to ensure that sufficient tonnage is available for undertaking the remaining tasks devolving on shipping in clearing up the immediate effects of war, and to ensure that adequate tonnage is available for the essential needs of the country.

Through spokesmen for shipping the United States has set as an aim for itself the transport of 50 per cent. of its oversea commerce, which is regarded by those authorities as not unreasonable. Just how this object is to be achieved and reconciled with the need for other countries to earn American dollars is not clear. It would not be easy for the United States to claim that she is under the same necessity to participate in oversea transport as countries are which must live by the sea, and as a creditor nation she must allow other countries opportunities of paying their debts. In the past the United States was content that a large proportion of her commerce should be carried efficiently and cheaply by the ships of other nations, since she was able to offer employment ashore to all who wanted it and the life of the sea is hard. Only sheer necessity impels countries to maintain shipping industries to carry the goods they require for their own sustenance as well as to carry merchandise for others, and Great Britain is one of those for which this need is paramount.

## OCCULTISM

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### MYSTERY WITHOUT MAGIC

by RENÉE HAYNES

**F**OR some millennia the Chinese were accustomed to treat night-blindness with raw liver and incantations. During some two hundred years, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, educated circles in Europe regarded the practice with good-humoured ridicule, as one of the more picturesque and disgusting superstitions of the East. From the nineteen-twenties onwards doctors became vitamin-conscious; and began themselves successfully to prescribe the same remedy, invoking not dragons but laboratory rats.

For some millennia also, the human race in general was accustomed to believe in ghosts, in non-human spirits, in good and bad luck, in black and white magic and in the idea that certain persons possessed powers of knowing what was going on in the minds of others, and of foretelling the future; whether through flashes of direct apprehension or through such symbolic dreams as that of the seven fat and the seven thin cows which prefigured in the sleep of Pharaoh the Egyptian harvests.

Again, in that curious rigid spasm of rationalization which affected Western culture for two hundred years, it became an inviolable convention among enlightened persons to ridicule these beliefs as superstitions, Gothic, medieval or primitive.

Again, gradually, and largely through the detached and steady work of the Society for Psychical Research (briefly outlined for the first time in a pamphlet issued this year), it has begun to come

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within the bounds of intellectual respectability to acknowledge under the general head of "supernormal phenomena" the occurrence of events inadmissible by their former names.

The appearance of Mr. J. W. Dunne's books in the nineteen-twenties and thirties was felt to give the austere blessing of a mathematician to the thesis that future events might in some peculiar way become partially apparent to the human mind during sleep; the work of Dr. Soal, of the University of London, showed in statistical terms that they could also become apparent during waking life, while the mind was concentrated on something else. The something else in this case was a continuation of the patient, protracted card "guessing" experiments originated by Dr. Rhine, which had already made known to a considerable public the fact that the capacity of living persons to become aware of the ideas of other living persons with whom they were not in sensory contact had been tested and measured as accurately against chance as, say, the odds in a totalizator.

Mr. Whately Carington's carefully considered theory that this faculty worked through the ordinary mechanism of the association of ideas, but of ideas taking place in a communal subconscious mind, linked up very convincingly with the psychological thesis conceived and advanced independently by Dr. C. J. Jung, that such a communal subconscious mind may be observed to exist, an echoing and immortal storehouse of energetic experience for all generations. (This theory, incidentally, does much to render comprehensible the Christian contention that all humans are born with an inherent tendency to wrongdoing consequent upon an evil ancestral choice still imperceptibly but most fatally active in prompting desire, rationalization and decision.)

The schools of psychology in their turn contributed detailed data, formulated observations and again, and perhaps most important of all, new intellectually reputable names for occurrences discredited by their former "superstitious" sobriquets. Ill-luck, for instance, was freshly labelled "accident proneness" by workers doing research in industrial psychology; and, when physical causes could not be found, was frequently traced to the operations not indeed of an avenging external fate but of an interior and unacknowledged sense of guilt flowing far below the levels of verbal thought towards self-punishment. Doctors also noted the curious

interlocking of emotional stress and physical symptoms among Army sufferers from "effort-syndrome" and among patients of all kinds in whom such diseases as gastric ulcer were observed to arise not only from such a combination of physical and nervous strain as affects, say, bus-drivers condemned both to irregular meals and to continuous tension, but also from the erosion of anxiety, grief, guilt-feeling, anger or fear.

Here then are to be found judiciously relabelled as "supernormal phenomena," "extra-sensory perception," "accident-proneness," and so on, the old beliefs in ghosts, in second sight and in good and bad luck. There remain twin subjects so far not discussed: the conviction that living non-human entities exist which, though themselves invisible and intangible, can yet affect material objects; and the idea of magic. Both of these seem peculiarly unfit for grafting on to the tree of scientific thought; for both involve the acceptance of the extraordinary axiom that it is possible for energy, with no traceable or measurable means of physical discharge yet to move, to hit and even to burn inanimate material things.

Yet these ideas are as old and as widespread as the rest. In China, to cite once more that serene pragmatic civilization, it was long a recognized custom to let at low rents to poor men with large cheerful families those houses made at best uncomfortable, at worst almost uninhabitable by an unhappy "atmosphere," inexplicable voices, stone-throwings and fires; in order that the high spirits of the large cheerful family might serve to neutralize the cause of these activities. It is worth noticing that within the last ten years, and in this country, an insurance company has met a claim for damage made by fires found in connection with similar disturbances.

These disturbances also, then, have discreetly changed their names by scientific deed-poll; and are known not as the work of devils or evil spirits but as poltergeist infestations. As exhaustively documented by Mr. Harry Price, they seem to fall into two categories; say, that of the resident and that of the sporadic poltergeist. The first is usually to be observed occurring again and again in the same house or locality; the second flourishes and fades in connection with one specific person. Both usually seem to draw the energy they expend from growing adolescents in whom

instinct, emotion and religious pattern are not yet fully integrated; but while the former, the resident poltergeist, seems merely to use the energy for its own terrorizing purposes, the latter, the sporadic variety, may plausibly be explained as some mysterious physical expression of a psychological conflict in the person from whose presence the disturbances spring.

It may be that a fruitful parallel to this latter phenomenon may be found in epilepsy which, though it has been defined as a "‘purposeless’ discharge of physical energy," is yet artificially induced by electrical convulsion therapy as a remedy for that disease of the mind called schizophrenia. Perhaps, however, a more valuable analogy, since it covers both "resident" and "sporadic" poltergeist activity is to be made with asthma; the asthma of allergy, provoked by some definite external stimulus; and the asthma of neurotic origin.

In this latter disease, as in gastric ulcer, there is vividly to be seen the effect of strong emotions upon the body; which has of late years been more and more surely shown to express and to exhibit and to sustain in inseparable significance the experience of the whole self. It does not seem unwarrantable to suppose that such strong emotions, working in some manner not yet understood through the body's energies instead of on its substance, may serve to dramatize the deep conflicts within the subconscious mind by ringing bells, lighting fires, throwing objects and hammering.

There are, moreover, on and off the record, a number of instances where such a disturbance does seem to have been noted in direct connection with known psychological suffering. One, noted by Dr. John Layard in a paper read to the Society for Psychical Research, is that of a man involved in a painful emotional conflict who, muttering in a deep sleep, was observed by his wife and son to cause in some unexplained way the loud ringing of a bell, which signalized his distress. Another is that of a woman who, bombed out and bereaved in the first great air raids of the war, became for a time the unconscious centre of poltergeist phenomena, setting coals and jugs and knives and saucepans flying in the kitchen where she worked, and later bolts of cloth in a shop, until the acuteness of her raging grief and resentment faded out, and the disturbance with it.

Logically, if it is considered to be within the bounds of possi-



bility for the turmoil of the subconscious mind in some as yet unknown manner to cause the movement of inanimate things, there is no reason to rule out the possibility that the conscious will may be exercised in the same way; though not necessarily with any detailed understanding of the processes involved. (Thus, the child instinctively teaches itself to walk; the ballerina consciously learns to dance; but neither needs an anatomist's detailed knowledge of the muscles of the leg.)

However, though many of the occurrences formerly attributed to "white" and "black" magic have been accepted in contemporary language and thought under the neat new specifications of hypnosis, auto-suggestion and mass suggestion, which admit the power of the mind over itself and over other minds, this other aspect does, in the climate of opinion of our time and civilization, seem so absurd as to bounce like a ball off the wall of human incredulity.

Yet a series of experiments reported in the same pamphlet to which previous reference has been made (*The Society for Psychological Research: What it is, What it does, Why its Work is Important*) does provide evidence that the bare volition can affect inanimate objects. In these experiments, made in a university's psychological department, dice "mechanically released, roll down a slope of corrugated cardboard and, striking against the cushioned back of a chair, bounce off on to the seat. The bystanders desire them to fall so as to total either a high or a low score. The scores are tested by the standard formulae of the calculus of probabilities, which show how probable or improbable it is that the result is due to chance. As against the suggestion that the dice may be biased, Rhine reports significantly high and low totals obtained with the same sets of dice."

It is staggering; both to common sense and to the scientific preconceptions of our age. Yet, as is pointed out in the context, modern science itself arose as a system of empirical observation of and deduction from brute facts, in opposition to the *a priori* rationalism of the fifteenth century; and should in accordance with its own nature take account of these newly verified brute facts, rather than dismiss them as impossible because they do not fit in with the *a priori* rationalism of the nineteenth.

Moreover (in spite of Mr. Tyrrell's contention, in his presi-

dential address to the Society that there is in the human mind a "biologically useful . . . universal complex which rejects the paranormal," a contention true only within the limited context of the human beings involved in that mechanized culture which the industrial revolution has brought into being) these particular brute facts do fit in with the long mythology of the human race; and even now may find a masked acknowledgment in such curious, familiar proverbs as "lucky at cards, unlucky in love," a statement which perhaps recognizes the fact that the player, accustomed deliberately or unconsciously to exert his volition on the inanimate, enures himself to what Martin Buber has called an "I—It" view of the world, difficult to resolve into that "I—Thou" relationship essential to continuing affection between persons.

One value of psychical research, said Mr. Tyrrell in the presidential address already quoted, is that it "throws the world into a truer perspective." It does indeed seem that after two hundred years of materialist taboo it is, partly as a result of the Society's investigations, becoming possible to take intellectual cognizance of phenomena so long denied scientific attention; and often accepted only rather grudgingly and as "of faith" even among Christians, whose religion necessarily involves belief in personal immortality, in the existence of discarnate beings, in instances of foreknowledge, and in the collective subconscious of the "old Adam" on the one hand and of the Mystical Body on the other.

In what kind of world then, in what new universe, do we now stand observant? If it is immeasurably wider, wilder, stranger and more ancient than that mentally inhabited by the medievals, it is also infinitely more significant, more complex, more closely integrated, more unitary than that inhabited by the mechanists. The body is not a robot driven by the mind; the mind is not Huxley's "epiphenomenon" generated by physical existence. Both are two poles of a single self. The mind is deeply affected by the body; whose desires may distract it completely; whose ordered activity may, as the results of the Peckham Experiment indicate, bring it happily to the realization of that immanent biological pattern known in transcendence as the Natural Law; and whose deliberate movements in deep breathing may be used to induce the stillness of contemplation.

The body is as deeply affected by the mind; whose anxieties, sorrows and fears it may exhibit in the physical suffering of asthma, of gastric ulcer and of such boils as externalized Job's miseries; whose torment it may somehow discharge in poltergeist disturbances; and whose holiness it may willy-nilly make known by such well-attested instances of levitation during prayer as were observed in Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Joseph of Cupertino, or by the impression of light recorded in the conventions of ecclesiastical art as a small gold plate worn symmetrically behind the head (or even, as in an engaging convent portrait of St. Thomas More, behind the hat).

This mind and body, this bi-polar self, shaken by past and present storms beyond its cognizance, poisoned by hidden seeping springs of ancestral evil, or healed in coolness by the *Lumen cordium*, is linked so closely with other selves that it can even be distracted by their very thoughts; as appears in Dr. Laurence Bendit's study of paranormal cognition among his patients, and more especially in the case of a woman supposed to suffer from verbal hallucinations, who was found to be "overhearing" the conversation that had gone on between Dr. Bendit and his friends at a luncheon party an hour before and several miles away.

This linking of awareness, moreover, seems to extend even beyond the ambit of other human selves and to embrace also the strange unformulated consciousness of animals; the spaniel staring its owner into taking it for a walk (a Thurber picture!); the cat eagerly and accurately timing the return of an erratic master whose movements are quite unaccountable; the hound howling in mourning at the moment of its mistress' death.

Such a linking is not, of course, peculiar. Humans share much of the physical nature, many of the compelling instincts, of animals; use their small identities—Puss, Towser, Poll—to bear the burden of projected love; and carry in myths and dreams their images. There are the doves that convey, now Aphrodite and now the Holy Ghost, creative love of body and of soul; the scapegoat carrying sin away, the lamb transmuting it; the witch hare whose death indicates the transformation of instinctive into spiritual energy; the archetypal beasts that seen distortedly become the "familiars" of wizards and the obscene creatures painted by Breughel the Elder and Hieronymus Bosch; the archetypal beasts

that seen in glory glow as the lion and the eagle of the evangelists, the apocalyptic splendours burning bright.

It is not strange that in this universe newly known in its close integration of bodily being, archetypal symbolism, and instinctive, intellectual and spiritual awareness, humans should realize for the first time since Descartes sawed apart thought and experience their solidarity with the rest of creation, in intensely significant body as in consciousness, in sensory as in extra-sensory perception.

To Christians, to whom the dogmas of the infinite meaning of the body, the singleness of body and soul, and the unity of the human race as "members one of another" have always been taught, it must come with the excitement of trumpets to perceive newly through the intellect what has already been accepted in the different mode of faith. These having observed the organic and unitary structure of creation may go on to reflect in wonder upon the organic and unitary means of its renewal in Christ, God and man; named in the animal image of a lamb; seen, touched, tasted, in the vegetable stuff of bread and wine; known in the Blessed Sacrament at every level of the self's awareness, the community uniting, the spirit receiving, the mind formulating, the emotions adoring, the subconscious accepting, the senses perceiving, the body fed.

POETRY FOR POETRY'S SAKE AND POETRY  
BEYOND POETRY

by STEPHEN SPENDER

POEMS are hypothetical and theorematic. The hypothesis of a poem is the emotional experience, the moment of vision, the flash of insight, the *ligne donnée*, the central point of impulses and impressions: it is the validity of this moment which the consistency of the poetic logic proves. The coherence of the demonstration of the original hypothesis makes a poem 'true,' not its general truth. Notoriously, everything about Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is poetically true and convincing until Keats, in the last two lines, goes outside poetic truth and makes a raid on general truth in 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty.' Immediately here he has entered a world where ideas can be disputed, because he has gone outside his original hypothesis which centres on the concrete experience of the Grecian urn.

That 'poems are hypothetical and theorematic' is all, like beauty, that a critic of his contemporaries need know. If he takes the lesson well to heart, he will combine the two widely separated but quite essential qualities of contemporary criticism: the greatest tolerance and sympathy with the experiences, inspirations, technical devices and form of his contemporaries, combined with the greatest strictness as to the poetic logic (once the hypothesis has been accepted) with which these are carried out. The problem is to have a standard which is wide enough to accept the newest experiences and the most experimental devices (or,

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for that matter, the oldest conventions and subjects) combined with one which is scrupulously critical of method. The critic must be tolerant of the hypothesis; but he must scrutinize very closely the theorem.

Beyond this there lies the criticism of the hypothesis itself. When we discuss the difference between a major and a minor poem, having agreed that the poems are successful demonstrations of their hypotheses, we then abstract the hypothesis and measure it against general truth. To say that a poet is a 'major poet' is not a purely poetic judgement. Within poetry itself, there are no such things as major and minor poets, there are just poets who write poems, and once a poem has been accepted as a poem, there is nothing more to be said. The distinction between 'major' and 'minor' implies an acceptance of the social function of poetry, a measuring of poetic truth against general truth. This is the distinction which it is most difficult for contemporaries to observe, because we have no means of judging the greatest truth and the most significant experience, amongst all present events and ideas. Moreover, since all the time the claims of contemporary ideas, events and experiences press themselves very closely on us, the appearance of these things in poetry is disconcerting and liable to arouse feelings of sympathy or antipathy in us which have little to do with the poetry considered as poetry.

Thus, when criticism moves from judging the poetry in a poem as poetry, it moves to judging the poem as a 'criticism of life,' or as having a content of living experience, apart from an achievement as created poetry. *The Essay on Man* is 'greater' than a song of Shakespeare's simply because it is longer, it deals with a wider subject-matter, and so on, not because it is more perfectly expressed. And the *Divine Comedy* is greater than either, because it deals with a more universal picture of living experience. Some poems of a poet are 'more ambitious' we say than others; and here we use the words 'more ambitious' in a worldly rather than a poetic sense, meaning that they aim higher, that they say more, and that they attempt to deal with a grander subject-matter.

This measuring of comparative greatness is therefore a very difficult task in the criticism of contemporary criticism, because here we are not just measuring poetry as poetry, but poetry as a means of expressing in poems ideas and themes to which we

attach importance. Now for a poet, his own experiences which he can express in poetry are the only poetically important ones. We live today in an age of overwhelming public events. These events seem to have an importance which makes many people—journalists in particular—feel that they ought to be put into poetry. The people who considered themselves the mouthpieces of the recent war were particularly incensed at the reluctance of the majority of poets to put their distinguished client into metre and rhyme. The poets were equally full of disavowals. From them was a chorus of 'We do not want to be war poets.' And, of course, in a sense there were no war poets. That is to say, no good poems were written which were—to use Mr. Geoffrey Grigson's words in his Comment at the beginning of Oscar Williams's anthology *The War Poets*—'thumps on the tub, the morale poems.' But in another sense, there were war poets. That is to say, the war certainly became the deeply experienced emotion which contributed to the poems of all, or almost all, the true poets writing during the war.

Of course, these things could not have been otherwise: the war was incapable of producing war poets and at the same time the poets were incapable of not being war poets. The whole controversy about war poets is therefore futile, and I only draw attention to it because it raises the question of whether one should judge every contemporary poem simply as poetic achievement, that is, as the poetic theorem based on the hypothesis, or whether one should also take 'great' or 'small,' 'major' or 'minor' subject-matter into account. This is today a valid question not merely for critics, but also for poets. Because if critics consider poetry simply as poetry, with no regard to the worldly, the prosaic, the unpoetic scale which measures poetry according to the significance of the subject-matter in a hierarchy of actual events, then there is no reason for poets ever to be 'ambitious.' Impure and ambitious poetic aims may be defended, and, in fact, by implication always have been, on the ground that worldly greatness and large-scale events can transform themselves into poetic greatness. Today there is evidently a reaction from this point of view. Most modern poets, finding themselves living in a world whose events are often summed up only too correctly as 'like a scene from Dante's *Inferno*' are appalled by the scale of their world and look

inside themselves for something smaller. So far from wanting to write epics, they belong to a society for the protection of poetry from the epic. Impurity creeps in by way not of grandiosity but of the search for a philosophy of life. Some of the best poets have returned to the metaphysical source of inspiration.

Mr. Robert Graves is opposed to all impurities, past and present. He writes of a purely poetic subject-matter, and here his Foreword to his *Poems 1938-1945* is most illuminating:

'Since poems should be self-explanatory I refrain from more foreword than this: that I write poems for poets, and satires or grotesques for wits. For people in general I write prose, and am content that they should be unaware that I do anything else. To write poems for other than poets is wasteful. The moral of the Scilly islanders, who earned a precarious livelihood by taking in one another's washing, is that they never upset their carefully balanced island economy by trying to horn into the laundry of the mainland; and that nowhere in the Western Hemisphere was washing so well done.'

This is not only a shrewd self-appraisal, it is also a shrewd criticism of Mr. Graves's fellow poets who 'horn into' religion, philosophy, psychology, politics, events and occasions. And Mr. Graves's own poems have the air often of being solid and wry little touchstones which, self-contained and unconcerned as they are with other poems than themselves, yet somehow imply a gritty comment on most of their contemporaries by other poets.

The full moon easterly rising, furious,  
Against a winter sky ragged with red;  
The hedges high in snow, and owls raving—  
Solemnities not easy to withstand:  
A shiver wakes the spine.

In boyhood, having encountered the scene,  
I suffered horror: I fetched the moon home,  
With owls and snow, to nurse in my head  
Throughout the trials of a new spring,  
Famine unassuaged.

But fell in love, and made a lodgement  
Of love on those chill ramparts.



Her image was my ensign: snows melted,  
Hedges sprouted, the moon tenderly shone,  
The owls trilled with tongues of the nightingale.

These were all lies, though they matched the time,  
And brought me less than luck: her image  
Warped in the weather, turned beldamish.  
Then back came winter on me at a bound,  
The pallid sky heaved with a moon-quake.

Dangerous it had been with love-notes  
To serenade Queen Famine.  
In tears I recompensed the former scene,  
Let the snow lie, watched the moon rise, suffered the owls,  
Paid homage to them of unevent.

I quote this exquisite poem, *A Love Story*, in full because it is not only an almost perfect example of Mr. Graves's manner but it also saves me trouble by supplying its own comment in the last line, 'Paid homage to them of unevent.' For the point is that nothing happens, nothing is said, in Mr. Graves's poems except the poetry. One has the impression in this poem of a lifetime having been passed to no purpose, except to extract the poetic metal from the ore of experience. One is then given the pure ore, with no comment, no message, no consolation, and the poem exists by its complete negation of extra-poetic ambition. Mr. Graves writes a kind of pure poetry which is different from the search for the pure phrase, the pure line, the pure music of the French purists: it is the rather roughly hewn poetry of a purely poetic experience. Compare the above lines with T. S. Eliot even at his most detached in *Four Quartets* (*Little Gidding*) and one sees at once the difference:

Ash on an old man's sleeve  
Is all the ash the burnt roses leave.  
Dust in the air suspended  
Marks the place where a story ended  
Dust inbreathed was a house—  
The wall, the wainscot and the mouse.  
The death of hope and despair,  
This is the death of air.

This is not the extraction of poetry from life, it is the judgement of life by poetry.

There are flood and drouth  
Over the eyes and in the mouth,  
Dead water and dead sand  
Contending for the upper hand  
The parched eviscerate soil  
Gapes at the vanity of toil,  
Laughs without mirth,  
This is the death of earth.

Here Eliot creates his vision of life for us in order that we may reach beyond it to his belief, to his experience of prayer, his further vision of timelessness.

Critics were surely right who saw in *The Waste Land* a general picture of a civilization collapsing into chaos. The strength of this picture was the extraordinary range of different colours of experience on which Eliot was able to draw: some of them evidently experiences of a highly personal nature, some of them derived from literature. The total effect was of one overwhelming experience with a sombre colour and a broken texture of its own, conveying a general picture of despair. But this despair was of a personal kind, even though many people shared it, and if Eliot had written nothing after *The Waste Land* future critics might well have thought of him as one of those poets, like Webster or Tournour (with whom, indeed, at this stage he seemed to feel a kinship), who poured a personal despair, perhaps also representative of their age, into their poetry.

After *The Waste Land*, Eliot became a different kind of poet. He did not abandon his personal experience, but he used it as the colours with which to paint a picture of a different experience. The despairing experience is still there (as in the lines quoted above) but it is used to depict the experience of faith.

Graves uses experience as an ore from which to extract poetry, many poets use poetry as a means of expressing their general deductions from experience, Eliot uses experience of death as a means of depicting timelessness and eternity. The thought behind Eliot's later poetry is thought living its way into poetry. It is not necessarily and uniquely poetic, though it justifies itself poetically because Eliot does not write it until it has become part of his poetic experience. But *Four Quartets* is the poetic expression of ideas in Eliot's mind which, considered as ideas, are religious and

philosophic, though they justify themselves in poetry. Poetry is here used as a particular use of language to convey the experience of religious and philosophic thought. Sometimes the thought strains against the medium and is not completely achieved as poetry.

*Four Quartets* is not only poetic experience, but it also *means* something which could be expressed in another way than poetry, though in so far as poetry is achieved, the imagery, music, etc., which make it poetry could not, of course, be expressed in any other way. The language therefore moves on two levels: one is the creative level of poetry in which images and delightful objects are created which give us pleasure, the other is the level of philosophic thought. These two levels are sustained throughout, and thus the language has a kind of transparency: one looks through the picture, to the thought behind it, as though the images and colours were painted on glass, with a light shining behind. Some younger critics call this kind of writing, in which language is used with the greatest precision in order to express a movement of thought (which could be expressed in other words, if it were separated from the delightful poetic movement superimposed on the thought) the 'new classicism'; and they call a more recent tendency in poetry, in which objects are created without a thoughtful meaning behind them, the 'new romanticism.' I think that these terms are confusing, and it would be more valuable to draw a distinction between *transparent* poetry and *opaque* poetry. Eliot and Auden used language transparently; Dylan Thomas, Edith Sitwell, Vernon Watkins, use it opaquely.

Auden uses poetry more and more as a language of metaphors with which to work out his philosophy. His 1945 volume contains *The Sea and the Mirror*, which is a commentary on Shakespeare's *Tempest*, and *A Christmas Oratorio*. The two levels, of thought and poetic language, which I have spoken of in connection with *Four Quartets* are sustained throughout. It is easier to be delighted with Auden's virtuosity in form, his charm of language, and his wonderful power of invention, than to follow his thought. I confess that here I am rather at a loss, because I have never been able to understand with immediacy his metaphorical language, which often seems to me a very eccentric habit of thinking, and I know that other readers do follow it unobstructedly.

To take an example (a comparatively simple one) from the Preface to *The Sea and the Mirror*. The Stage Manager says:

O what authority gives  
Existence its surprise?  
Science is happy to answer  
That the ghosts who haunt our lives  
Are handy with mirrors and wire,  
That song and sugar and fire,  
Courage and come-hither eyes  
Have a genius for taking pains.  
But how does one think up a habit?  
Our wonder, our terror remains.

Art opens the fishiest eye  
To the Flesh and the Devil who heat  
The Chamber of Temptation  
Where heroes roar and die.  
We are wet with sympathy now;  
Thanks for the evening; but how  
Shall we satisfy when we meet,  
Between Shall-I and I-Will,  
The lion's mouth whose hunger  
No metaphors can fill?

The reader may judge me stupid to be puzzled by these lines, and I quote them precisely because I believe in honest dealing and feel that he should know where I am stupid. The language appears to me to have happiness; it has verbal character quite apart from what it means. The trouble is that the imagery forms a kind of barrier between me and the thought, which I feel I would understand better in prose. I see that the problem of the first stanza quoted is the philosophical one of the thing-in-itself. The images in this stanza are used in a concrete scientific way, almost as in textbooks of philosophy. In the next stanza we shift from the problem of knowledge to that of moral philosophy. Here the barrier which obscures the thought for me is the line 'Art opens the fishiest eye.' Since 'song and sugar and fire' are meant very concretely as things inhabited by the ghosts who are the inner core of reality, and since the 'Flesh and the Devil' are also meant very concretely, it is difficult not to think of 'the fishiest eye' as the same kind of lecture-demonstrator's imagery. To do so, of course, destroys one's chances of understanding the rest. The left

hand of Auden's thought often seems to be eluding the right hand of his poetic invention. Although both hands are moving very quickly, at the same time, and although Auden's mind is very active, he does not seem at all anxious to make the reader understand what he has to say. At the same time, this elusiveness is certainly not the result of clumsiness or intellectual confusion. There seems no doubt that Auden himself understands very well what he has to say: his obscurity is not so much of his poetic idiom as of the idiom of his Thought; and this produces the curious effect sometimes that everything seems far clearer and smoother and easier than it really is. Occasionally, too, one is rewarded by passages of inspired translucency, such as the beautiful speech of Alonso to Ferdinand, which begins:

Dear Son, when the warm multitudes cry,  
Ascend your throne majestically,  
But keep in mind the waters where fish  
See sceptres descending with no wish  
To touch them; sit regal and erect,  
But imagine the sands where a crown  
Has the status of a broken-down  
Sofa or mutilated statue:  
Remember as bells and cannon boom  
The cold deep that does not envy you,  
The sunburnt superficial kingdom  
Where a king is an object.

Auden has arrived at a stage of his development where he says with Prospero in his *The Sea and the Mirror*:

Now, Ariel, I am that I am, your late and lonely master  
Who knows now what magic is;—the power to enchant  
That comes from disillusion.

The enchantment is deliberate, conscious and sustained. The world having been 'seen through' as a system of symbols which have no validity apart from the value which man attaches to them, the necessity of attaching such values is also seen, and the myth is reconstructed for the sake of an intellectual and a moral necessity. In Auden's world everything and everyone is either a 'symptom,' that is to say a neurotic gesture towards a significance which is not achieved, or else a 'symbol,' that is to say a gesture

which has worked its way into a coherent pattern of other gestures. Auden is the only person who knows his own highly idiomatic world. He can tell Shakespeare what *The Tempest* is about, he can tell the *New Testament* what Christmas is about, elevating myths and behaviour to a vibrant condition of complex self-consciousness, and restating them in the idiom of his own mind, which has added the idiom of late Henry James to that of psychoanalysts and physicists, and mixed them all into a prematurely 'late Auden' manner of his own. It is the wonderful translucency with which he grasps exceedingly difficult mental positions and restates them in a language transparent as glass—glass with a surface which distorts everything seen through it; it is this which makes him the most intelligent of modern poets. The form, although always mastered, seems very arbitrary: if he expresses an idea in a sestina, there is no reason, one feels, why he should not have expressed it equally well, say, in a ballade, or in a sequence of two sonnets. His long works are curiously lacking in a sense of structure. Even *The Sea and the Mirror*, which requires little form, being only a Commentary, is nevertheless bogged by the immensely long and turgid prose of Caliban, who speaks in a manner which would seem so late and involved even for Henry James as to be positively posthumous.

What one longs for in Auden's poetry is the contact with and the wonder of a real and immediate concrete experience whose diamond hardness and intrinsicality refuses the attempt to turn it into an intellectualized symbol. There is plenty of mystification in his work but no mystery. He is mystifying because he knows things so much better than the reader and because he sees always beyond and through his subject-matter to the pattern of theory behind: he is never mysterious, because the mere fact that things exist, the fact that one does not always understand, the fact that things happen as they happen, the fact that events exist in all the isolation of their own exactness, all this does not amaze him.

Auden and Eliot both use poetry as a language of symbols with which to express a system of thought. Poetry enables them to give life to their philosophies, for it is the means by which they explore the ability of their thought to live its way into their poetic experiences. For Eliot, however, the irresolvable intrinsicality of things which can be pointed to by way of illustration but

which cannot be melted down into mental symbols still exists. *Four Quartets* is full of such indications of things, of scenes, of atmosphere, which exist in themselves, and which provide us with windows out of Eliot's spiritual habitation into the world which we share with him. To read Eliot you have, intellectually, to be with him, but he is also with you in the world that you know, the world 'Where you lean against a bank while a van passes.' To read Auden, you have to inhabit his mental world entirely. If 'the green hill sits always by the sea,' it is not just because it is there, but for a very good psycho-religio-politico reason.

With Edith Sitwell we enter an entirely different kind of world. Miss Sitwell's poetry is poetry for poetry's sake, it is not poetry beyond poetry. Neither is it pure poetry in the sense of seeking only to express a purely poetic kind of experience, as with Graves. It expresses a developing experience of life and of the world. With Miss Sitwell one may speak of a real development of her whole personality in her poetry, while with Graves there has been no such development; there has only been a purifying down of a wider, less discriminating poetic creative impulse into something within very strict limits. Miss Sitwell's development has evidently been towards experiencing more and more of her whole experience and emotion in a poetic way. The difference between her early and her later work is that in her earlier poems only a limited part of her experience went into her poetry, which, with all its entrancing qualities, seemed partial and, at times, eccentric. In her later work, there is a wholeness which makes us feel that, already, before it is written, the experience of the anguish of the modern world has been absorbed by her and transcended within her own personality, for her poems are at once large and broad and extremely personal. *Serenade: Any Man to Any Woman* begins:

Dark angel, who art clear and straight  
As cannon shining in the air,  
Your blackness doth invade my mind  
And thunderous as the armoured wind  
That rained on Europe is your hair . . .

The invasion of France in 1940 has already become remote—  
'thunderous as the armoured wind, That rained on Europe . . .'

and in losing its sense of contemporaneity, it has become poetry, and at that, Miss Sitwell's poetry.

Two impressions predominate in the ripe and magnificent later work of Edith Sitwell. One is the music and the other the imagery. The music is, as it were, a horizontal movement which in its long, measured pace has a certain appeal also to the eye: the imagery is very vertical. It suggests upright figures, the sun in the zenith, corn, the Pillar of Fire, trees, etc. There is more than this: there is also a prostrate imagery of death, earth enclosing bodies in its dust, kings who have died long ago. Miss Sitwell's extraordinary control of her medium is due to her power of keeping things separate. She is like a painter who uses very simple colours, but who makes them all glow and gives them a structural purpose: or again, she is like a composer who is extremely conscious of the use of intervals and of notes widely separated from each other. This effect of separation of the music from the imagery and of image from image can only be attained by the simplest means used with the greatest intensity and clearness of purpose. By invoking the same images again and again, by using very often the same rhymes, Miss Sitwell makes us thoroughly acquainted with the notes of her instrument on which she produces her prodigious hymns.

We are the darkness in the heat of the day,  
The rootless flowers in the air, the coolness: we are the water  
Lying upon the leaves before Death, our sun,  
And its vast heat has drunken us. . . . Beauty's daughter  
The heart of the rose and we are one.

Here one gets the long, horizontal, measured beat, manipulated with faint disturbances—the disturbance of a comma or three full-stops—to indicate the restlessness above the calm of a summer evening. The imagery itself all suggests things standing or things prostrate, the rootless flowers, the sun.

Although it is easy enough to describe Miss Sitwell's effects, it is not so easy to say why they are successful. Some critics have complained of the limitations of the material, which they think show a lack of invention. Perhaps these critics are misled by the fact that Miss Sitwell is an extremely inventive poet who has created a world, very much her own, into thinking that she ought



to invent much more. The mistake here is, perhaps, to think of Miss Sitwell as a poet whose chief excellence is her power of invention. Her greatness really lies in her ability to project the growth of her whole personality into her poetry. She exists in her poetry as Lorca exists in his songs and ballads, and as Van Gogh exists in his painting. The light, the ripeness, the death and the anguish of these later poems are as accurate a picture as we have of an interior life of the spirit. This great spirituality is wonderfully conveyed and to ask it to invent more is to misunderstand the great strength and concentration required to breathe life into her images and her music. Far as it is from the English imitations of the Spanish, I think one must look to Lorca for any mood which corresponds to such a poem as *The Youth with the Red-Gold Hair*:

The gold-armoured ghost from the Roman road  
Sighed over the wheat  
'Fear not the sound and the glamour  
Of my gold armour—  
(The sound of the wind and the wheat)  
Fear not its clamour . . .  
Fear only the red-gold sun with the fleece of a fox  
Who will steal the fluttering bird you hide in your breast.  
Fear only the red-gold rain  
That will dim your brightness, O my tall tower of the corn,  
You,—my blonde girl . . .'  
But the wind sighed 'Rest.' . . .  
The wind in his grey knight's armour  
The wind in his grey night armour  
Sighed over the fields of the wheat, 'He is gone . . .  
Forlorn'

Dylan Thomas is another 'opaque' poet who writes poetry for poetry's sake.

Unlike Mr. Graves, he does not extract the pure poetry from experience; unlike Miss Sitwell, his poems are not the hymns of an inner poetic experience within which a lifetime of wider experience has been transcended. To Thomas, simply, every vivid impression for which he can find a suitable image is poetry. In a way, his prose reveals his poetic method even better than his poetry does. For in his prose we see him as he is, a kind of poetic roving camera, who snaps up everything and puts it down as a

brilliant poetic image in words as tasty and as full of local sea-flavour as winkles which one buys from a stall on the coast. The obscurity of his early poems was due to the fact that they were poems written without any strong principle of selection to guide the reader through the thick images and the loquacious sounds. They were often just collections of wonderful poetic insights, sustained by no unifying thought or experience behind them. The difficulty at once disappeared wherever there was a unifying theme, as in the well-known lines in memory of Ann Jones.

Probably Thomas is the poet who has gained more than any other (if any others have at all gained) from having to do war work. Writing scripts, broadcasts, and so on, has given him the sense of a theme, without taking away from the forcefulness of his imagery. There is no fundamental divorce between his prose and his verse rhythms, and this has enabled him to invent new rhythms in his verse, which owe much to prose, without having the diffuseness which vitiates entirely free verse:

The hunchback in the park  
A solitary mister  
Propped between trees and water  
From the opening of the garden lock  
That lets the trees and water enter  
Until the Sunday sombre bell at dark

This is very close to prose rhythm, and one must not be misled by the elaborate patterns which some of the poems make on the printed page, to think this part of a reversion to regular form similar to the reversion of Auden in his later work. The principle of Thomas's poetry is entirely free, and the patterns which he has arrived at are obtained by listening to the rhythms that come most naturally to him in ordinary speech, and slightly emphasizing and conventionalizing them. Thus, hearing him read a talk about memories of Christmas on the wireless, I understood at once the patterns of his recent poetry which are essentially patterns of speech, the music of rhetoric. Their force will be seen at once if lines such as the following are read aloud:

Into her lying down head  
His enemies entered bed,  
Under the encumbered eyelid,  
Through the rippled drum of the hair-buried ear;

And Noah's rekindled now unkind dove  
Flew man-bearing there.

The music and the pauses here are those of the speaking voice.

Words, rhetoric, violent imagery are obviously Thomas's virtues. He becomes also a colourist, a painter of the characteristic landscape of Wales and the West, who has affinities with Frances Hodgkins and Christopher Wood.

Graves, Edith Sitwell, Eliot, Auden, Dylan Thomas, all of these demonstrate theorems which prove their hypotheses. One does not have to criticize them in the sense, often, of finding fault with the way in which they do what they can do. Add to them this year Walter de la Mare, whose *The Burning Glass* has all the qualities and virtues which we have come to expect from him: and Edmund Blunden's *Shells by a Stream*. De la Mare's poems create a world which has the peculiarity that, although others may admire it and pause in it, it is not strong enough to provide anyone else with a habitation. De la Mare is an innocent writer whose innocence lacks the ferocity of Blake's. The first poem, *A Portrait*, sums the poet up, with an enchanting and lovable modesty, and it implies also a challenge:

Too frail a basket for so many eggs—  
Loose-woven: Gosling? cygnet? Laugh or weep?  
Or is the cup at richest in its dregs?  
The actual realest on the verge of sleep?  
  
One yet how often the prey of doubt and fear,  
Of bleak despondence, stark anxiety;  
Ardent for what is neither now nor here,  
An Orpheus fainting for Eurydice;  
  
Not yet inert, but with a tortured breast  
At hint of that bleak gulf—his last farewell;  
Pining for peace, assurance, pause and rest,  
Yet slave of what he loves past words to tell;  
  
A foolish, fond old man, his bed-time nigh,  
Who still at western window stays to win  
A transient respite from the latening sky,  
And scarce can bear it when the Sun goes in.

This is a beautiful poem of old age. It leaves the reader with a feeling of envy for a peace, unattainable to him, which Mr. de la Mare after all has won in his life's work.

Another perfectly accomplished poet is John Betjeman. His appeal, of course, is not that he is satirizing the things he satirizes but himself for liking them. His poetry has the charm of the double bluff. Finally it becomes superbly the minor style which it at first seems to parody:

Intolerably sad, profound  
St. Giles's bells are ringing round,  
They bring the slanting summer rain  
To tap the chestnut boughs again  
Whose shadowy cave of rainy leaves  
The gusty belfry-song receives.

This is beautiful writing and beautiful observation. One can read Betjeman's poems with pleasure not only in—to quote the blurb—'comic verse whose fun is perpetually trembling on the verge of seriousness' but also to enjoy form admirably handled and things really seen. What prevents Mr. Betjeman being serious even in his serious moments is not the subject-matter which he satirizes, so much as the inability to take himself seriously. He is still always the schoolboy who pretends that he is only pretending to be a poet. But by now everyone except himself has found out that he really is one.

If Betjeman pretends to pretend to be a poet, there is no such pretence about Mr. Vernon Watkins, who wears his poetic vocation with an air as a curate wears his back-to-front collar; and there is nothing funny about it. The first poem in his new volume is an account of a pilgrimage by Mr. Vernon Watkins to visit Mr. W. B. Yeats in Dublin:

But Yeats, Yeats the poet  
Under Dublin skies,  
After the ten years' journey,  
On which no seagull flies,  
After the waves of silence  
I look him in the eyes.

Mr. Watkins, wearing his poetic collar, presses Yeats very hard and questions him on every subject under the sun. He gets back a flood of vague answers all of which are faithfully reported:

'Tell me about that young group  
Of Welsh writers,' he said,

'Whose poems in that paper you sent me  
The other day I read.'  
An image stands on Carmarthen sands  
With the black birds overhead.

We are soon on to the Psychical Research Society:

The Psychical Research Society  
Lately has found  
It can experimentally  
Foresee that resting-ground  
A second before the fall of space  
And the death of sound.

And so on, and so on. In a way this interview is funny, in a way it is sad and depressing in its heavy-going portentousness. There is nothing of the Yeats who gossiped endlessly about George Moore in it. Nor is there anything of Max Gertler parodying Yeats in his portentous vein. Surely, Yeats was more serious when gossiping than when talking all this solemn rubbish: surely Gertler, or one of Yeats's Dublin friends, took Yeats more seriously than Mr. Watkins. If one has to interview people in the style of Lewis Carroll, for God's sake interview some business man and not a poet. I suggest that Mr. Watkins could have made hay of Sir Montagu Norman. Thus:

'How is the Bank of England,  
Sir Montagu?' I said.  
'Owing to the Labour Government  
The Bank of England's dead.'  
I watched that brine-grey seagull  
Fade behind his head.

Etc., etc. It is quite easy to do and interviews like this would brighten the morning papers.

At his best, Mr. Vernon Watkins, with his grey seriousness, is a considerable poet, because he can produce a very concentrated effect. His first book contained some striking short poems. However, in his second book, he has inflated tremendously his poetic currency. *Sea Music for My Sister at Sea* contains excellent lines. It is a rhapsody of about fourteen pages, one of the great fleet of vessels which follow in the wake of Rimbaud's *Bateau Ivre* across the lyric wastes. But Mr. Watkins's ship is an Atlantic

liner and it is never drunk enough. *The Broken Sea* is a sequence of poems written at the time of the Fall of France and dedicated to the poet's godchild, born in Paris. With his grim determination always to be the poet transcendent and never to put any 'news' in poetry (Yeats's own poetry is full of 'news' by the way) we are taken on a trip to Paris without seeing any of the sights, still less what is going on. Oh yes, there is a glimpse of the Sorbonne, but how disappointing it is. Mr. Watkins will stand in the way all the time with his eloquence.

Thus we are told that Owen was 'prophetic,' that Blake was 'innocent,' that 'Dante lifts the form of man till he bears the stars,' that Hölderlin divined a vision of Greece, that Kierkegaard was 'world-moving,' and so on. None of this information is sharp or new enough. Probably it is excellent for Mr. Watkins that he should have let himself go so far in this book. He is the kind of poet whose bad work rather confirms one's interest in him. It requires courage to go in so many directions at once as he does in this volume. Also, the rhythms, the music, and the invention, never lose their energy and their impulse, however mistaken the direction may seem. To be able to write so much and with such fervour about subjects which are dangerous to his talent shows that one may expect poetry of great strength when Mr. Watkins discovers a subject in which he may concentrate his strength instead of his weaknesses. It is a pity that Yeats did not say to him what he once said to me: that he had always tried to simplify his poetry, to bring it closer to everyday speech, and to prune it of 'poetic' effects.

#### BOOKS DISCUSSED

- Poems 1938-1945*, by Robert Graves (Cassell, 5s.)  
*Four Quartets* by T. S. Eliot (Faber, 6s.)  
*The Song of the Cold* by Edith Sitwell (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)  
*For the Time Being* by W. H. Auden (Faber, 8s. 6d.)  
*Deaths and Entrances* by Dylan Thomas (Dent, 3s. 6d.)  
*Shells by a Stream* by Edmund Blunden (Macmillan, 5s.)  
*The Burning Glass and Other Poems* by Walter de la Mare (Faber, 7s. 6d.)  
*New Bats in Old Belfries* by John Betjeman (John Murray, 6s.)  
*The Lamp and the Veil* by Vernon Watkins (Faber, 6s.)  
*The War Poets*, edited by Oscar Williams (The John Day Co., New York).

ELEGY FOR TWO VOICES

by DALLAS KENMARE

THE COMING OF AUTUMN

*Héloise speaks:*

**T**HIS is an autumn song, this is the song of the grave abbess  
of the Paraclete,  
once the young, the passionate girl who in the spring of her  
days fell in worship before the mind of Abélard—  
(strange that they do not understand the passions, the hungers  
of the mind)—  
To the young, the ardent Héloise the great Abélard was a god,  
a god who fed her starving mind with the golden bread of  
Olympus,  
whose every word was weighted with richest ore.

And now I am an ageing woman who has hungered through the  
seasons, the years,  
watching the falling leaves, the stripped branches, the swelling  
buds and the full leafage of summer—  
still I live, the blood growing quieter with the passing of youth. . . .  
Quieter, yes, but the blood is not all—there is the hunger of the  
soul, the cry of the bereft heart, the lonely mind—  
the blood is not all.

This is the autumn song of Héloise, watching alone the drift of  
the falling leaves,

*From THE POETRY REVIEW, Galloway Kyle, Editor*  
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watching with a heart restless as the autumn sky,  
And though I say spring will come, though I know spring lies  
    waiting even in the womb of winter  
till in the darkest days it quickens and grows impatient for birth,  
though I know Earth, the Great Mother, will cry Alleluia to the  
    Lord of Life  
and go at last garlanded with flowers, haloed with sunlight,  
yet now the leaves of the heart flutter and sink into the eternal  
    earth  
and I feel the touch of autumn, the merciless and merciful,  
autumn that comes with wild skies and wild cries, heralding  
    winter and cold pain.

And I, the holy abbess of the Paraclete, would hide, not in the  
    sanctuary of God, but in the arms of my beloved,  
would shelter with him from the menace of inevitable pain;  
from the cold hand of life and of age I would be shielded by his  
    love.

I fear now never to know ecstasy again. . . .  
my days pass in a monotone of devotion;  
I speak wisdom to my children in God, and myself have learned  
    no wisdom,  
have learned only with the passing years that without Abélard  
    there is no life,  
that I live on only as an empty shell as I smile serenely and mete  
    out wise words to my questioning daughters;  
I have grown cold and empty, I whose arms were created for  
    love's embraces,  
not to be folded severely on my breast in a humble attitude of  
    devotion,  
I whose hands were made for the healing touches of love,  
not to be clasped, closed, in a meek attitude of prayer.

My life is a blasphemy, a lie,  
I am no holy abbess, no aspiring saint;  
I am a woman who desires only love, the love of Abélard,  
I am weary of pretence, of pious simulation.



A great chestnut-tree stands in the convent garden, old and very  
steadfast. . . .

year by year I watch the branch-pattern on a changing sky.  
Now from the tree the leaves fall again, one by solitary one,  
and always with the changing of the seasons comes the heart-  
break, the abortive hope. . . .

Slow leaves drift on the still air,  
hopes fall, one by solitary one,  
I see the years patterned on a restless sky.

Slowly the leaves fall from the chestnut-tree, the seasons pass. . . .  
Must I endure till death this same landscape, this beautiful scene  
that speaks now only of my failing hopes, and the loneliness  
of the passing years?

Already the first shadow of age has fallen upon me,  
silently, unawares, as the first pale gold leaf falls from the lime-  
trees

and the green and the sweet scent of summer has gone—  
and I ask, what did we make of summer, we who enjoyed a few  
short hours of mountain-air  
only to turn, lacking courage, and descend to live on the plains,  
mistrusting the heady air,  
deluded by thoughts of a heaven purer, fresher, more crystalline  
than the mountain-heights of earth?

We were given wings—no feet could have climbed to those im-  
possible heights, though they were swift, too swift, to descend—  
so the wings drooped and shrivelled, and at last fell from us,  
and we cannot recover them, they will not grow again. . . .  
It is useless to pray, the gift of wings is not offered twice to any  
man.

Yet sometimes there is peace. Sometimes in spite of grief and the  
hell of separation  
all within and about me is still as an unshadowed pool at dawn,  
and there is a serenity limpid as the pale saffron light of the dawn  
sky. . . .

Then my love reaches beyond space and time, beyond the region

of the furthest stars, and even in separation enfolds my  
beloved,  
my heart sings silently, poems and chants of praise and illimitable  
love,  
and every breath I draw is worship.

### THE COMING OF WINTER

*Abélard speaks:*

The first frost has fringed the fallen oak-leaves, there is a crackle  
of ice on the rain-pools as I pass. . . .  
last evening the sky smouldered at sunset, and a great star flashed  
crimson fire over the dark sea,  
pulsing with the pulsing of my heart. . . .  
the heart I have wrestled to mortify into submission, till now I am  
weary, mortally tired of such struggle and such failure, and  
laugh bitterly at my hollow philosophy—  
“He saved others, himself he cannot save”—is it ever thus with  
the saviours? Failure may be the condition of success . . .  
Such thoughts are food for bitterness indeed!  
“Hail to the Lord’s anointed!”—and the oil is the gall of agony—  
I would beg leave to be exempted from such anointing, these  
favours from the Almighty are not welcome;  
I have not sought the role of redeemer—yet I cannot escape,  
there is no way of shedding the burden.  
The lime-trees are bare against the November sky,  
limes that in sun-drenched summer sing with scent and the cease-  
less murmur of bees,  
sing, sing of summer and the delights of young love. . . .  
Now the branches are bare and the tree draws nourishment from  
the cold earth,  
not from the passionate sun.  
And I, when I too was young and drew life from the sun, deemed  
myself very wise;  
I had a ready answer to every question; God, I believed, had  
given me insight into His pattern,  
I was quick to prescribe for every ill.  
Then came Héloïse, the girl all woman in body, all man in mind,  
and in soul the flawless child—

then came tragedy and bliss, and confusion began, mocking at  
my theories,  
till now I see no glimmering of a pattern, and the words "God's  
will" are themselves the deepest confusion,  
though my children in God still look to me for guidance, and  
believe that the famous, the great Abélard is wellnigh om-  
niscient—

small wonder I smile bitterly.

For I know only that I have stumbled and failed,  
know only that I was offered, and rejected, heaven,  
know only that for ever now the sour fruit of error turns my life  
to wormwood

and the days are a malicious mockery, and each returning season  
brings its fresh measure of pain. . . .

Sometimes it surprises me to realise how little value I attach now  
to "ideas,"

how little I, the passionate thinker, care now for the thoughts of  
wise men. . . .

Always now I would know something of their experience, and of  
the nature of the suffering that gave birth to their wisdom;  
I would know whether they speak of what they believe and have  
proven true, or of what they wish to believe,  
and sometimes almost delude themselves into believing—as some-  
times I do. . . .

Often I turn from philosophy, theology, even from poetry, saying,  
"Once I, too,

thought, felt, thus. . . ."

Now it seems I have passed beyond common suffering into a con-  
dition numb as flesh that has suffered mutilation and has  
healed.

I marvel as I recall the easy assurance and glib optimism of my  
youth,

the lightness of my heart as I sang my songs among the blossoming  
cherry-orchards of April—

Now in the dark middle years the Spirit has driven me into the  
wilderness, into the cold and the dark—

I have learned something of the Temptation. . . .

I am certain of nothing now but the great fact of God,  
and care nothing for labyrinthine speculations on the Divine  
Nature;

I am weary of the war of ideas, and marvel that I was destroyed  
for a doctrine—

the Trinity will exist eternally without any impassioned defence  
from me, or from anyone. . . .

It seems that the mind is the destroyer and the soul alone has  
wisdom,

which is a mystery, for the wisdom of the soul is wordless.

Love and the nearness of Death are the merciless masters that  
teach humility,

there is no more room for the proud mind, nor any further  
thought of power—

the relentless, beneficent mills have ground the mind to powder,  
I am broken and made new. . . .

There remains the great fact of God, and the friendship of  
Nature. . . .

Now the frost has yielded to the wooing of the midday sun;  
delicate branch-fantasies are mirrored in the rain-pools  
and the wide ploughlands are a motionless sea of shining furrow-  
waves, overshadowed by searching gulls;  
on the monastery-wall bright jasmine-stars glimmer, and beyond  
the garden the restless breakers foam around the rocks. . . .

I turn my face to the sun, the low midday sun of November, and  
hold in one vast gesture of love the whole miracle and glory  
of the natural world—

I who was once a poet, a singer, a passionate lover of trees and  
stars, wild winds and mild winds, woodland and sea and  
flower,

fall now in worship before the beauty that is ever my friend;

I would be quiet and commune with the beloved who never fails,  
who is ageless and immortal, on whose breast I find solace  
and peace.

And I, Abélard, once the trouvère, the maker and singer of songs,  
    know now that I  
am guilty of a twofold betrayal,  
I, a creator, called to worship God in new songs springing from  
    the deep wells of the soul,  
laid aside my pen, and have worn away my latter days in the  
    repetition of prayers and chants made by other men;  
I who was called to be the lover of Héloïse, to reveal through our  
    love the glory and meaning of the bond between man and  
    woman,  
turned aside and listened to other voices—and have learned now  
    that in turning I  
turned away from God.

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

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### CONSEQUENCES OF NATIONALIZING THE BANK OF ENGLAND

by R. F. HARROD

SHOULD a country's Central Bank be a government agency? This would be a fine question for a debate on principles in any gathering from a school debating society to the Brains Trust or House of Commons, nay to the pages of a severe philosophical treatise. T. H. Green, had he only been an economist, could have found within the range of issues involved most of the instances he needed to illustrate his fundamental propositions. In what follows, however, I propose to steer clear of questions of principle, and to confine myself to the much narrower, albeit in the present case perhaps not less important, topic of what will be the practical and operative consequences of nationalizing the Bank of England in 1946. I can by no means share the view which appears to be held by the majority of persons of middling information that the consequences will be nil, in the sense that all will proceed as before the Act—*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

From the beginning the Bank of England, like similar institutions which have since been created in other countries, has stood in a special relation to the public. The fact that it was the government's sole banker, managed the National Debt, was for long the only joint stock company to have the right of note issue, in due course became the banker for all other important banks in the country and in 1833 acquired the privilege of having the status

From THE POLITICAL QUARTERLY, Leonard Woolf, Editor  
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the end, despite their individualism, they were driven to establish a monopoly. The story of the inauguration of the Federal Reserve System has its moral. The Republican Administration had prepared a blueprint for a central bank and taken the initial steps to introduce it, when it was defeated by the Democrats in the Presidential election of 1912. Hostility to banking monopoly was very strong in the United States, and the Democrats were bound by their principles to oppose monopoly in every form and in particular to support separatist interests against any concentration of financial power in the east. Accordingly they put the blueprint into the waste paper basket. And yet logic and recent experience drove them to establish something very similar. Then, if ever, was an occasion for implementing Bagehot's dictum. There was no centralized system in existence. The administration, strongly supported by public opinion, was as much opposed to concentration as any administration is ever likely to be. Actually it confined itself to preserving a facade of devolution by establishing twelve banks instead of one, but these twelve formed one system which was co-ordinated by the central Federal Reserve Board, appointed by the President of the United States. Even this mild concession to separatism may well have done harm in due course. The summer of 1930 was a world-historic time. Had it been possible then to prevent the world depression from deepening, everything that has happened since would have been quite different. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, which under the guidance of Benjamin Strong had been carrying out a progressive policy of experimenting in the control of the trade cycle in the twenties, was willing to push to extremes a policy of "reflation." That was a chance for proving whether banking policy alone could cure a great depression. Perhaps it could have—who knows? Thus World War II might have been avoided. But the New York Bank was prevented from making the experiment by the other Federal Reserve Banks.

How has the Bank of England discharged its monopolistic responsibility? It is generally agreed that since the middle of the last century, if not for longer, it has not endeavoured to increase its shareholders' incomes by any policy recognized as inimical to the public good. To that extent it has behaved like a "public corporation." This is not, I think, a point at issue. But has its policy

indeed been in the public interest? What have been its objectives and criteria?

Until 1931 its main objective, assigned to it by Parliament, was the preservation of the gold standard. More precisely this meant that it had always to be able to redeem its notes in gold at their statutory value. It meant further that it had to be able to give cash to its depositors, which include all the great banks. It had to be able to pay them in its notes, and, since these were redeemable in gold, it had in effect to be able to pay them in gold. In so far as other banks had a sufficient reserve in Bank notes or on deposit at the Bank of England, anyone who had a balance at a British bank could get hold for it on demand. The Bank in fine had to remain solvent in gold. But there was no automatic rule for maintaining this solvency; wise management was required.

A famous attempt was made to reduce this management to rule of thumb by Peel's Bank Act of 1844. That Act imposed stringent regulations in regard to the note issue, and it was hoped that these would suffice to make the maintenance of the gold standard automatic. Peel told the Bank that, now that its note issue was so strictly regulated, in all its other operations it might seek profit like any other bank. But Peel's lesson had to be unlearned by bitter experience, the moral of which was ably pointed out by Bagehot. He argued that this objective of maintaining solvency in gold should be taken account of in all its operations, and not only in the regulation of its note issue. After some years Bagehot's lesson was accepted.

How far did the Bank in the nineteenth century recognize the duty of securing fairly stable conditions for trade, of preventing speculative booms and relieving depressions? This matter was much discussed and some implicit recognition of the duty seems to have been given. It is difficult to give a precise answer, because there was really no clear line of demarcation between preserving the gold standard and maintaining stable trading conditions. In a commercial crisis the gold standard was necessarily in jeopardy. The duty of maintaining the gold standard meant something more than maintaining it by hook or by crook, by having the Bank Act suspended, by rushing to the Bank of France for a loan, etc. It meant maintaining it in an orderly, steady condition, with-



out crisis or panic. And as this was impossible if commercial crises occurred, maintaining the gold standard and maintaining steady conditions for trade seemed to amount to one and the same thing.

In the discharge of this duty the Bank no doubt made mistakes from time to time; but it is not, I think, alleged that the Bank failed in any notable way, anyhow between 1866 and 1914, to keep abreast of the best opinion about what ought to be done; it is not suggested that the Treasury or a strong Public Corporation would have achieved a better record.

We must now approach the modern period. During a great war, the central bank (whether nationalized or not) has the primary duty of assisting the government to finance the war with the least possible amount of inflation. Central banking policy becomes merged in Exchequer policy. That we financed the heavier burdens of World War II with less inflation than World War I is to be attributed to the general economic policy of the government for mobilizing resources rather than to any specific banking policy. That we financed the borrowing required for World War II at a lower rate of interest is to be attributed to the rise into the ascendancy of the ideas of Lord Keynes. For the deflation which followed closely on World War I, in so far as this was due to deliberate policy at all and not a mere automatic aftermath, the Treasury and the Bank must share responsibility along with informed public opinion, which issued no warning and made no protest until after the event.

When we come to the return to gold in 1925, the shadow of blame begins to fall. In regard to the return itself, many independent persons must have felt sympathy with Mr. Bevin in his impassioned post-mortem recently delivered on the occasion of the repeal of the Trade Disputes Act of 1927. But the responsibility for it was widely diffused. Lord Keynes was almost a lone voice warning us against it. A few wise heads, like Lord Milner, murmured, and perhaps a few foolish heads too. But broadly the return to gold was approved by the general body of well informed opinion.

In the period between 1925 and 1931 the gold standard was not managed quite in the old way. At this time the United States had a large margin of gold in excess of legal reserve requirements, and the Federal Reserve System took this opportunity to develop

a policy of managing the dollar with sole regard to maintaining steady conditions for business. It was able to "manage" the currency precisely as if there had been no obligation of keeping it convertible into gold. We were not in this happy position since our margin of gold reserve was narrow. None the less in deference to the undercurrent of hostility to gold and opposition to deflation that was beginning to flow more strongly after the return to gold, the Bank did not re-introduce good standard principles in their full vigour. It had to walk on a tight rope, trying on the one hand to give us something like a managed currency, yet not having the reserve which made it safe, from the gold standard point of view, to do so. The fact that we were forced off the gold standard in 1931 was in part due to this policy of compromise and could be claimed by the Bank as evidence that it had not interpreted its obligation to safeguard that standard in an oppressive sense.

The events of 1931 give better grounds for grievance than those of 1925; they caused deep and justifiable resentment on the Labour side and probably made "nationalization," once Labour should achieve power, inevitable. We do not know how the blame must be divided between the Bank and the Prime Minister. In the early part of 1931 there was still no solid public opinion in favour of our abandoning the gold standard voluntarily; and the Labour Government was ostensibly, and presumably in fact also, in favour of doing what was necessary within reason to maintain it. When the crisis grew, loans were obtained from the United States and France. To my judgment it is quite incredible that the American authorities, when approached for a second loan, should on their own initiative have suggested retrenchment in the distribution of unemployment benefits as a condition of the loan. It is possible that it was put to them by us that such a stipulation by them would be most helpful to us politically, in order to bring the majority of Labour Ministers to their senses. Even if the American authorities did make this stipulation on their own initiative, our representatives could have rejected it outright. Every penny borrowed from France and the United States at that time was covered by gold in the Bank of England; we could have offered that gold as 100 per cent security; alternatively we could have used the gold to save the gold standard—a reserve is only worth holding if it can be used on occasion of crisis—and thereby dis-

pensed with the loans; alternatively we could at that point have given up the unequal struggle to maintain the gold standard. Thus American stipulations, if any, were quite irrelevant; but the rumour of them weighed heavily with public opinion at the time. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's broadcast on August 25 was phrased in terms likely to strengthen the rumour. The idea that a retrenchment in unemployment benefits was necessary to save the gold standard, and thereby to save the country from ruin is the essence of what has been called "the bankers' ramp." It was a fatal error and a wrongful method of proceeding. It was a deep wrong too; these unemployed men and women were having a hard struggle. It was the kind of wrong that even in this wicked world brings nemesis in the end.

Of course the Bank of England may have been quite innocent in the matter and have expressed strong opposition to this mode of proceeding. Failing proof to the contrary, the British public will continue to have a shrewd suspicion that the Bank authorities, with the mentality they had in 1931, were not totally opposed to the way in which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was handling that crisis.

The matter was made much worse by a wide change in public opinion after 1931 on the question of retrenchment. If the reduction in the distribution of benefits was a bitter medicine which really had to be taken if the affairs of the nation were to be set in order, if the choice had really been between that or ruin, then good British common sense including Labour common sense, would, after a time for reflexion, have condoned a little sharp practice to get the medicine taken quickly. One may deceive a patient to save his life. But after 1931 more attention began to be paid to the views of economists, which had indeed been voiced before 1931, that so far from being good medicine it was positively harmful to restrict the purchasing power of the unemployed in the middle of a severe industrial depression. This view became official doctrine in the United States after the accession of Roosevelt. This fortified the opposition to the influence of the Bank and deepened its ground. Attention shifted from the "ramp" to the background of ideas which had made a ramp seem justifiable. It was not merely that those financial circles calmly acquiesced in taking their pittance from the unemployed, but that

they were hopelessly wedded to obsolete economics. Therefore it was necessary to make an attack on their stronghold and dethrone them. Let the cobwebs be swept clean away. And hence the Bank of England, which, with its great traditions, admitted efficiency and awe-inspiring prestige, would probably have been rather low on the list for nationalization by a socializing government in 1914 was at the top in 1945.

Meanwhile what happened after 1931? Hitherto when we had gone off the gold standard, the needs of war finance dominated the scene. But now there was no war. What was to take the place of the objective of maintaining the gold standard, to govern the policy of the Bank?

The economic historian of the future will give the spring of 1932, when the Exchange Equalization Fund was set up, as the date of the effective "nationalization" of the Bank of England. He will do so at any rate if he writes with discretion. That was the time at which the main responsibilities of the Bank of England were transferred to the government. For more than a century the Bank had been responsible for the British currency; its objective in the discharge of this responsibility had been, save in intervals of major wars, the maintenance of the gold standard. To achieve this objective it had to use discretion in carrying out operations in the money market. In the latest period the objective had become a little blurred since it was under some pressure from public opinion to avoid deflation if possible. With the establishment of the Exchange Account, the restoration and maintenance of a gold standard ceased to be the primary objective of currency policy and certain other objectives took its place, and H. M. Treasury assumed responsibility for the measures required to achieve them. Responsibility and authority were alike transferred, and the Bank, in this, its supreme, function, was formally reduced to the status of a mere agent.

This great revolution was affected very quietly by Mr. Chamberlain, on behalf of a National government of preponderantly Conservative character. The nemesis, if loss of responsibility and authority in what had hitherto been its prime sphere be deemed a nemesis, had come very quickly, if unobtrusively and without dishonour. The avenging furies could sate themselves in the blood of their victim. But because the revolution was so silent, resentful

feelings in regard to the Bank and all that it was supposed to stand for were not assuaged. Some may feel that the recent Act of Nationalization does no more than give public and formal expression to the revolution of 1932, and is therefore meet and proper.

But the world has not stood still since 1932, and before passing judgment on the true effect of the recent Act it is necessary to examine more closely what has been happening in the meantime.

The question may be raised why the staid Mr. Chamberlain should have sponsored so radical a change in our financial system. The answer is given by the purposes of the Exchange Account. Put briefly these were to maintain the value of sterling at a reasonably steady level from day to day, while letting it move in the long run to such new equilibrium levels as from time to time might be found consistent with a balance and reasonably large volume of foreign trade, to offset international movements of funds arising from political alarms and excursions, to build a reserve against the sudden withdrawal of funds such as occurred in the summer of 1931, and to insulate the internal economy from the effects of such movements. These were all wise objectives which commended themselves to those who had given thought to the lessons of 1931. They were correct and proper objectives and in principle quite precise. But in practice they were not altogether precise. Some of the terms were not capable of precise measurement. What was an equilibrium level? Which movements of funds were due to political alarms and which to the natural commercial process of foreign investment? From which movements was it desirable to insulate the internal economy? These were wise objectives, but not of such a character that it was always quite plain whether they were being achieved or whether certain measures were or were not well designed to achieve them. Contrast these with the objective previously assigned to the Bank of England, namely that it should always be in a position to pay 123¼ grains of 22 carat gold against the tender of a £1 bank note. The Bank was a company with shareholders and depositors, and experience in the past had shown that it was reasonable to expect it to be able to discharge its duties in their interest while fulfilling the precise objective thus defined. But these new objectives? They were sound and nationally desirable. But in the practical pursuit

of them there was bound to be some vagueness about what ought to be done. Might not the Court get into an equivocal position in regard to its ordinary duties to shareholders and depositors? And when the new objectives were so much a matter of judgment and discretion, might it not get into an equivocal relation to the public? It was not in any direct way responsible to the public. Its actions might well be criticized. When its ultimate objective, laid down by Parliament, was to keep its notes convertible, then it could justify its various measures as necessary to achieve this. But if it were merely told to keep the value of sterling at a satisfactory level, conducive to the national interest, then it would be difficult for it to proceed in the face of criticism. It would be in a false position. Relations with foreign powers were involved. Many Americans held that this country impeded a trade recovery, said to be well under way in the United States in the summer of 1932, by unduly depressing sterling in the autumn of that year. Should a private institution be put in a position of being solely responsible for action which might give rise to such charges? The charges might in certain cases be justifiable, since in implementing a policy, which at that stage was so much a matter of trial and error, with the best will in the world action might be taken which could subsequently be proved to have been unjustifiable and wrongfully damaging to the interests of friendly powers. Thus it was inexorable logic which led to the shifting of these responsibilities from a private institution to the broader shoulders of H.M. Government itself. It was the lack of practical precision in the definition of the new monetary objective, a lack of precision not in the least reprehensible, which made it impossible to leave responsibility in private hands.

To the Bank was assigned the task of operating the Account. Thus it continued to discharge its old functions but no longer had responsibility for policy. There were frequent and continuous consultations between the principal and the agent. The critic will be anxious to know what happened at these consultations. Which party really decided the policy, the Bank or the Treasury? Is it possible that under this new arrangement the Bank retained much of its old influence, that the Bank was the true principal and the Chancellor of the Exchequer merely the agent who looked after public relations? Questions about the ultimate seat of real power

are notoriously elusive, even in cases where there is much more published information than we have in this case. It is possible, however, to make certain conjectures.

There is no reason to suppose that there was any difference of opinion on the broad lines of Exchange Account policy already set out; there may, of course, have been acute differences on matters of detail. There was one important matter of policy which still formally rested with the Bank, namely that of interest rates. Public opinion and H.M. Government favoured a cheap money policy, and, if there was any disposition on the part of the Bank during any part of this period to wish for dear money—I am not suggesting that there was—it was clearly overruled. There is no reason to suppose, therefore, that in any great matter the Bank imposed its will or that the principal and agent did not work harmoniously together before the war. During a major war, central banking policy is in any case merged into Exchequer policy.

And what of post-war policy? In this public opinion is completely at sixes and sevens, and the government probably reflects public opinion. It would be necessary to go back many decades and generations to find such great confusion and such deep divergences. Has the Bank a mind of its own? It is very probable that it has.

It is important to notice that in the 1932–9 period the impotence of the Bank for evil—had it wished evil!—depended on the coherence and agreement among outside experts on the desirable policy. Had the Bank pressed for a return to a rigid gold standard, it would have been massacred in argument and disallowed in practice. Had the Bank broken the spirit of the compromise and using the vestiges of power still formally left to it inaugurated dear money in 1936, it would have known that the Government, National, or, if you like, Conservative, as it was, would have passed legislation, with the strong support of public opinion, removing those last vestiges of power. Now the position is quite different. Neither the government nor public opinion have coherent minds of their own. This greatly increases the potential influence of the Bank.

What a good thing that we have nationalized the Bank in time, the hasty enthusiast might argue. He would be wrong. The exact

opposite is the case. Formal nationalization has gone far to resurrect the power of the Bank and puts it much nearer where it was before its practical dispossession in 1932. It is to be noticed in this connexion that in the matter of interest rate policy, in which the Bank under the arrangement prevailing between 1932 and 1946 was still formally autonomous, there is not likely to be serious disagreement. The questions on which controversy centres are those of the "standard" and foreign exchange policy, and in that sphere the Government had the power in its own hands while the Bank was merely an agent.

Before explaining why nationalization will enhance the power of the Bank, I must meet an objection that will occur to the reader's mind. "You talk of 'the Bank,'" he may argue, "as though it were some durable unchanging object like St. Paul's Cathedral or the Matterhorn."—The Bank does, of course, undergo and has recently undergone great changes. "What I mean by 'the Bank,'" he may add, "is a collection of personalities of a certain type—crusted financiers with obsolete ideas. The nationalized Bank will not be 'the Bank' in the old sense at all. It will be a different institution infused with a new spirit, working harmoniously with and having the same ideas as a regenerated civil service." One may talk like this; but the reality does not correspond. I am not discussing the personalities now in the Bank or suggesting that the Government ought to "sack the lot." Quite the contrary. The reason why the Bank has on certain topics specific, characteristic views of its own, is because it has to do certain things. In popular discussions the part played even by such a powerful personality as Mr. Montagu Norman in forming the views of the Bank is greatly exaggerated. To some extent the views of the Bank may have been influenced by the type of man that became a director. But the main factor that moulds the corporate opinion of an institution of this kind is its daily task. In inter-departmental committees concerning points of policy of common interest the Foreign Office representative often takes a characteristic line, which it is easy to predict that he will take. This line is determined by the day-to-day duties of the Foreign Office in dealing with foreign powers. One might dismiss the whole of the present staff of the Foreign Office, but the new staff, after an interval of learning their duties, would soon be found to be taking



the same kind of line in certain typical instances. Their point of view on many matters is governed by the problems with which they are confronted. And so it is with the Bank of England.

When the Exchange Equalization Account was set up, the Bank of England was charged with the task of operating it. It had the requisite technical knowledge and experience. The operations of the Account interlocked closely with other operations of the Bank of England. Some agency is required to co-ordinate all these central operations. The Bank of England may be defined as the agency which does that.

And because it has to do these things, smoothly and efficiently if possible, it has points of view about policy. The Bank view may best be defined as the technician's view. In any sphere of action the technician's view is important and should be heard with respect. It is fruitless to adopt a policy likely to be impractical; the technician knows the hidden snags. But the technician should be subordinate. There may be wider objects of policy, the importance of which he is not well qualified to weigh, that call for measures that will spoil the smooth working of his machinery and give him endless trouble. The technician will be predisposed to resist such measures; indeed it is his duty to do so, for friction is something to be avoided if possible. The friction he foresees may well be real and injurious while the so-called wider aims of policy may be mere flapdoodle.

Under the pre-nationalization arrangements the Bank was given ample opportunity to present its views. On many technical points, one may guess, they were probably accepted. But in the last resort the Bank representative could always be sent packing; he was heard by courtesy but had no official status or responsibility for policy.

Now the position will be different. At an inter-departmental committee the Bank representative will be able to say, "I am afraid that the Governor must reserve his opinion." Thus action will be blocked. On a matter on which the Bank feels strongly, the Governor will no doubt get audience at the Cabinet, and he will be there not by courtesy but as the head of an important government department. It will be much less easy for the Cabinet to come to a contrary decision as soon as his back is turned. Moreover the Governor will be well briefed on the intricate pros and

cons. The subject matter of these controversial issues is such that most Ministers will not be well able by their own training to see the fallacies in his arguments. The Cabinet is only too likely to be won over by his convincing advocacy. Again the Bank will be officially represented on delegations to inter-governmental conferences. It is thus inevitable that the Bank's view will have much more influence than before. Once the point is grasped that the Bank view is not the capricious expression of some individual's personality but arises inevitably from its day to day routine, it is easy to see that nationalization is a retrograde step. If it is important that an agent should not acquire excessive influence, it is better to leave him in his position as agent and not make him a partner in the firm.

That the Bank has gained power by the Act I take to be certain. Can we foresee the practical consequences of this accession of power in the peculiar circumstances of to-day? I believe the dangers to be without precedent. Nationalization could have been carried out in the thirties with much less risk, so far as immediate consequences were concerned, because of the general consilience of views about policy. Now we are at the cross-roads; there is disagreement about which way we should go; the consequences of our choice will be portentous.

The technician has certain well-defined characteristics. In regard to a piece of mechanism that has functioned well he is naturally conservative. He distrusts other technicians with a different method of approach to the problem. He has a touch of the Empire-builder in him. Clearly in a case where his own firm has done a service remarkably well for generations, he will be totally opposed to any sharing of the work. It would be contrary to human nature to expect the Bank to be an enthusiastic advocate of the International Monetary Fund. It is bound to hark back to the world leadership and control which it exercised for so many decades before 1914.

It will be the technician's instinct to collect as many fragments of the old business as he can from the wreckage and conduct the business in the old way. The Bank of England will remain haunted by the ghost of its past glories. The matter is further complicated by the experience of war time. Having been very belated in adopting economic warfare methods of foreign ex-

change control, we finally practised them with great skill and success. Thus while in the old days the Bank would have looked with favour on a movement to free the channels of trade, it is liable now to fall victim to the illusion that these fascinating war-time techniques, handled with such art, can be applied in peace time too. But the avowed object of Bretton Woods is to break up all that machinery whether it dates from the war period, as it mainly does in our case, or from the pre-war period.

If one believes that the future greatness of the country depends on the energy and imagination she puts into building up a new economic world system in partnership with the United States, then one is bound to view with alarm any accession of power to the Bank of England view. This is typically and essentially a case, a case of cases, where the broad aims of policy should prevail over the narrow jealousies of the technician. Each time that the Governor goes well briefed to the Cabinet, if only we knew when it was, we should be anxious for the future of the country. The situation is the more dangerous in that public opinion in the country remains ambivalent, doubtful whether to take the bold line of partaking in world economic reconstruction or to lapse into isolationism. It is pathetic that the doughty champions who railed against the fetters of gold and other obsolete financial trammels should have taken a step which will decidedly strengthen the forces of reaction.

The foregoing argument relates to the practical effect of nationalizing the Bank of England now. Has it a wider moral? This is a difficult question. It seems sensible to hold that nationalization should be regarded not as an end in itself but a means, to be used on suitable occasions, to secure the sovereignty of the public interest. In this particular case nationalization has been a step in the reverse direction. Had it been possible to consider the matter coolly and at leisure, this point might have become evident. But this particular piece of nationalization was long ago predetermined by the events of 1931. Nemesis could not wait to hear the arguments; and, as in classic tragedy, has had little relation to just retribution.

Are these arguments relevant to other services which may be nationalized? In so far as the decisions of policy that have to be taken in regard to them from time to time are less intimately

bound up with the well-being of our economy as a whole than central banking policy decisions, the arguments have less force. None the less it is important that those anxious to secure the sovereignty of the public interest by state action should bear in mind the danger that when the administration of an industry is made an arm of government, it becomes better placed to push the sectional interests of that industry at the cost of the general interest.

THE DYNAMIC OF TOWN AND COUNTRY  
PLANNING

by GILBERT McALLISTER

THE New Towns Bill introduced by Mr. Lewis Silkin, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, which, as I write, has passed through all its stages in the House of Commons and happily begun its progress through the Second Chamber with an unopposed Reading, gives legislative form to an idea which has been keenly discussed for almost half a century. In 1898 the London firm of Swan, Sonnenschein & Company published a little book called *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Its author was an obscure Law Courts reporter named Ebenezer Howard. There was nothing about the publication calculated to arouse more than a passing, casual and restricted interest: it might very well have fallen stillborn from the press. Instead it had a remarkable reception. It was reviewed at length in newspapers of every political complexion and of none. It was reviewed, curiously enough, in the *Court Circular*: it was reviewed equally favourably in Robert Blatchford's Socialist weekly *The Clarion*. The name "Garden City" immediately sprang into current usage and retained its popular and inspiring qualities for close on half a century before it began to wither slightly under the misuse of the speculative builder and the word-snobbery of Bloomsbury and Whitehall. It was adopted not only into the English language but into most other languages, quite recognizable as *Cité-Jardin*, *Gartenstadt*, *Cuidad-Jardin* and *Tuinstad*.

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Within a few months of the publication of the book a meeting was held in the Holborn Restaurant to form an association to give to this airy nothing of the imagination a local habitation and a name. The chair was taken by the late Ralph Nevill, K.C. who thus became the first president of the Garden City Association, with the late Dr. Thomas Adams (afterwards famous as the town planner of New York) as the first secretary. The Association set out to raise the necessary capital to embark on the building of the first prototype Garden City. They found the public not unresponsive. A company called First Garden City Limited was registered and a site was chosen in the remote and inconvenient, but of course cheap, part of Hertfordshire where the town of Letchworth now stands. The Association crystallized the idea of the Garden City which it defined as

a town designed for healthy living and industry, of a size which makes possible a full social life but not larger, surrounded by a green belt, the whole of the land being held in common ownership or in trust for the community.

There was of course nothing startlingly revolutionary about this conception. It was the idea which had motivated Robert Owen at New Lanark and at Orbiston. It was the idea which had pervaded the writings of Ruskin who in *Sesame and Lilies* sketched the idea of the walled town with

no festering or wretched suburb anywhere, but clean and busy street within and the open country without, with a belt of beautiful garden and orchard round the walls, so that from any part of the city perfectly fresh air and grass and sight of far horizon might be reachable in a few minutes' walk.

It was the idea expressed in William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. It was the main theme of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. It embodied the Patrick Geddes trilogy of Place, Work, Folk. It was the reply not only to Cobbett's criticism of London but to Lord Rosebery when, as Chairman of the London County Council, he said:

I am always haunted by the awfulness of London: by the great appalling fact of these millions cast down, as it would appear by hazard, on the banks of this noble stream, working each in their own groove and their own cell, without regard or knowledge of each other, without

heeding each other, without having the slightest idea how the other lives—the heedless casualty of unnumbered thousands of men. Sixty years ago a great Englishman, Cobbett, called it the great wen. If it was a wen then, what is it now? A tumour, an elephantiasis sucking into its gorged system half the life and blood and the bone of the rural districts.

Prince Peter Kropotkin gave something like scientific clarity to the ideas floating in the air and certainly foreshadowed the Report of the Barlow Commission forty years later when in *Fields, Factories and Workshops* he advocated the limitation of town growth and the decentralization of population and industry.

Letchworth was built; and after the first world war, Welwyn. That the two towns succeeded cannot be doubted. They survived the test of ordinary commercial enterprise and paid their way. They had their difficult periods, of course, but each has paid for many years the maximum permitted dividend. They proved that it was possible to create beautiful residential estates within walking distance of well equipped and well laid out factory estates, and these not for light industries only but for heavy industries including at Letchworth a steel-works and at Welwyn heavy engineering. Above all they succeeded from the health point of view. They have the lowest death rates in the United Kingdom. Their infantile mortality rate is so low that one has to go to New Zealand for a comparison. When Manchester Corporation, first among the local authorities to possess the imagination and the determination necessary to emulate the Garden City example, embarked on Wythenshawe and moved the population from Hulme district to the new satellite town, every death rate fell by half within three years.

Years of propaganda and of demonstration did not have the desired effect. The State and the municipalities were reluctant to embark on an adventure which small groups of private people had successfully undertaken. Overseas the idea grew and was translated into reality. France, Holland, pre-Hitler Germany, the Soviet Union, Australia, where Canberra the capital was a direct inspiration from the Garden City movement, and the United States, where President Roosevelt's "green belt cities," although largely and mistakenly dormitories, were built—all proved more eager than Britain to follow the example so clearly demonstrated.

It was the impact of Munich which finally shattered the complacencies. Under the threat of aerial bombardment it became as strategically necessary to adopt a policy of dispersal for industry and population as the state of the distressed areas—to which a policy of centralization had contributed so much—had made such a policy socially and economically desirable. The Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, the Barlow Report, published as the population was lustily but prematurely singing “We’ll Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line,” contained recommendations advocating a precisely similar policy to that urged by the Town and Country Planning Association. The Association had put in the forefront of its policy—as did the Barlow Report—the necessity for the creation of a central planning authority. This was implemented in some degree when Lord Reith was appointed as Minister responsible for the physical planning of Britain’s town and countryside. The Reports of two committees set up by him, that under Lord Justice Scott on the future of rural land use and that under Mr. Justice Uthwatt on the vexed question of compensation and betterment, completed the Whitehall survey of problems which had to be solved if the reconstruction of Britain after World War II was not to be subject to interminably frustrating delays.

It would be foolish, however, to imagine that *any* Government or *any* Minister of Town and Country Planning would have had the courage or the imagination to go forward with a New Towns policy. History will, I think, give full credit to Mr. Lewis Silkin, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, for having pressed forward with a policy which, for the first time since town planning became the subject of legislation, takes physical planning out of the rut of restrictive, negative, permissive and fairly futile regulations into which it had fallen: the New Towns Bill for the first time makes planning not merely a matter of zoning for industry here, for a rural belt there and for ten or one to the acre in this place or that, but a matter of taking the plan from the drawing office to the site and clothing it in three dimensions. In my view there is no other form of planning.

And yet, now that the vague aspirations of half a century are about to be fulfilled some stray doubts creep in. Some of them have been quite needlessly produced by the Minister who, ignor-



ing the recommendations of the Lord Reith Committee, says that the State-sponsored corporation (and no great municipality such as Manchester or no inspired group of enthusiasts) shall alone build a new town. He stakes everything on the idea that the State corporation can always do things better than private enterprise however controlled, however restricted, however willingly it parts with its time-honoured freedom of action. Such a view has breath-taking implications. It means that in the Minister's view the State corporation will build not only better than Welwyn or Letchworth but better too than Bath, better than the New Town of Edinburgh, better—dare we say it?—than Nash.

Then there are all the other questions which obtrude themselves at such a time. How far is it reasonable to encompass an old community and destroy its way of life in order to provide a new community? Have we the right to uproot and dispossess? What of agriculture? What of the community life in the new towns and can community life anyway be thrust upon a population? Stevenage was in some ways a bad start. Even if an unpopular but widely circulated national newspaper had not sought to exploit the situation for the sake of Party advantage—or something—there was nevertheless a reality of bewilderment and dismay which could have been avoided if the whole scheme had been clearly and frankly explained to the indigenous population. And what of the people who are to be moved out from the huddled slums but also from the colourful streets of our overcrowded cities? These are all relevant and important questions. They do not suggest, however, that the whole question is an insoluble one: they clearly confirm that it is a complex one.

The problem may be shorn of some of its complexities however when some simple considerations are taken into account. The first of these is the question of alternatives. These are so glaringly before us that they have only to be considered to be dismissed as intolerable. They are suburban sprawl, ribbon development, rural scatter, or their antithesis, urban congestion. Ribbon, sprawl and scatter are the best devices for ruining agriculture and the countryside yet conceived by man. They provide their inhabitants with the worst of both worlds since they lack equally the amenities of the town and the refreshment of the countryside. Urban congestion, on the other hand, is a device which appeals to many

who, loving the countryside themselves, would nevertheless condemn the mass of their fellow citizens to inadequate sunshine, light and air and would deny them that ready access to the soil which answers one of man's deepest needs. Such a one, for example, is Dr. C. E. M. Joad who in his latest book *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Countryside* puts forward a plea for flats which does credit neither to his knowledge, his logic, his philosophy nor anything else that becomes a responsible man. He talks of the Karl Marx Hof in Vienna and praises it and bids us follow the example of the gay Viennese. How gaily, how wantonly the Viennese embarked on these massive machines for living, history, did Dr. Joad but know it, already records. The Viennese flats have been condemned not only by responsible architects and officials associated with the venture but by many visiting British housing experts who expected to find well-planned apartments and instead found living boxes 400 square feet in area. The flats were to be the answer to suburban sprawl. Behind the medieval encircling wall the workers' modern barricades, the crèche, the communal laundry, the communal recreation room, those places where everything is in common and the only uncommon things are privacy, solitude, quiet and the right of a man to be himself by himself. Cramped in their hygienic cells, frustrated in their birth-control barracks, sun and wind and soil starved in their cement and stucco wildernesses, the wretched inhabitants of these final monuments to a necropolitan civilization did the natural thing. It is easier to lay down rules than to have them carried out; and the Viennese workers were not so easily tamed. They went out to the outskirts of Vienna and they dug their allotments. They did more. They built sheds—at first to hold their gardening tools. Later the sheds were converted into shanties which became the Vienna workers' equivalent of the English week-end cottage—hardly an effective way of preserving the countryside.

But Dr. Joad had no need to look to Vienna. He should have read his Abercrombie. Before starting out on a work of this kind—unless he wished us to look upon him as the arch example of the untutored townsman—he should have read his County of London Plan. There he would have seen how one million people moved out of the County of London area in one decade before

the war. Why? Why did the "best elements" of the County population move out? They went for simple human reasons. They went because they were tired of the noise and the dust and the lack of sunshine of inner London. They went because they wanted to have a house of their own with a bit of garden round it where the children could play, the housewife could occasionally rest, and the husband could find exercise for his body and rest for his spirit in one of the most harmless of hobbies. And if they went to Hendon or Burnt Oak or Mill Hill or Becontree and not to that older, more spacious and altogether more elegant suburb in which Dr. Joad resides, they went for very much the same reasons as impelled him to make his home in Hampstead.

If we can put a limit to our cities by encircling them with a green belt and place the overspill in new towns beyond the green belt, each having its own agricultural belt inviolable against building, then we shall be able to thin out our existing city populations, re-house their still numerous inhabitants at not inhuman densities and provide for the inhabitants of the new towns an environment fairer and better than the mass of people in this country have ever known.

Only the new towns solution provides the answer to so many problems. The answer to the preservation of the countryside: to the re-building of our cities in a more spacious way: the answer which will put an end to some of the needless—stupid and depressing—as well as expensive—straphanging which is the lot of so many millions to-day. Only the new towns solution brings housing into its proper relationship with work and brings both into relation with every other facility and amenity of town life—the school, the church, the theatre, the shopping centre, golf-courses, tennis courts, etc.

Will the workers want to go to these new towns? That raises a larger question: does the worker ever choose where he will live? In the main he does not. His first quest is for a job, a steady job with security and a modest wage. When Messrs. Stewart & Lloyd moved from Lanarkshire to Northamptonshire, they had not the slightest difficulty in persuading ninety per cent of the population of two large villages, Bellshill and Mossend, to uproot themselves and go en masse to a new and alien country. It is also not irrelevant to remember the mass emigration of the working class—

again some of the best and most enterprising elements—to America, to Canada, to New Zealand, and Australia, which was a feature of the nineteen-twenties. If that proved anything it proved that the working class were willing to move to the other end of the earth and start life anew if only they could be satisfied that there was work to do, a little more money to be earned and a fairer start for their children. There will be no difficulty in populating the new towns if the Board of Trade and the other Government Departments responsible see to it that industrial development keeps pace with residential development.

What will the new towns look like? That is a question which no one can answer. Much will depend on the architect-town-planner responsible for the site layout and for setting the general pattern of the building development. It will depend in one instance, I feel sure, on Sir Patrick Abercrombie; in another on a Thomas Sharpe, or a Gordon Stephenson. It will depend on whether the architect is a disciple of Le Corbusier or Frank Lloyd Wright or whether he prefers to follow the more traditional ways of Sir Raymond Unwin, Sir Edwin Lutyens or Mr. Louis de Soissons. I hope that the New Town Corporations will be catholic in their approach to the problem and that we shall see in the new towns architectural and building conceptions wholly integrated in themselves but differing from one another and each somehow reflecting the best tendencies, socially as well as aesthetically, of the age in which we live.

The architect-town-planner is important. No less important is the sociologist, the man who has studied the ways of his fellow-men and can in some degree satisfy even his unexpressed desires. For we are not embarking on this gigantic project in order to build for the sake of building. We are building for the community, for the nation, for the family which is the heart of the community and of the nation. We are trying to create an environment in which every good human impulse will have room to grow and to express itself. We are saying goodbye to the ugly and the mean, to all those things which degraded our town building in the last hundred years and that produced the Gorbals (no miracle there except perhaps that in that sunless slumdom the human spirit did somehow survive, warm-hearted and generous), that produced Salford and a hundred other denials of man's personality.

The new towns which are to be built may very well be the most lasting gift of our time to posterity. Town and country planning is unlike most other human activities in that it costs very little. It does not alter the volume of building: it merely says where the building must go and where it must not go. It is the cheapest national investment: it brings the greatest rewards. That was a fact which was clear to William Morris, to Bruce Glasier and to many of the other early workers in the British Labour movement. Between the wars the Labour movement tended to forget the importance of physical environment in its struggle for more immediate objectives. It is perhaps a sign that the movement is going back to its native roots and ideals that one of the first acts of the first majority Labour Government should be to introduce into Parliament the New Towns legislation. The translation of this legislation into physical being will call for the applied zeal of men and women of many varying capacities. The Minister, who is to choose the personnel of the New Town Corporations, has a difficult task in selecting teams which combine practical and business capacity with social idealism and human understanding. There is an opportunity which many will envy. They will need courage. They will make mistakes—they will need courage to make mistakes and sense to recognize them as mistakes. If they hesitate and delay they will deserve censure: if they go boldly ahead they will have support and approval—and what is most important, understanding. They will be engaged on what is the highest adventure of our time.

ANATOMY OF BUTLIN

by KENNETH ADAMS

**B**ORN in Cape Town, brought up in Canada, Mr. William Edmund Butlin worked his passage to this country with £5 in his pocket. He set up a hoopla stall at Uxbridge fair. In hoopla you throw rings over blocks, and if one falls flat and free of the block, you win a prize. A deposit on the hire of the pitch, and the chocolate for the prizes, exhausted nearly all the money he had. He made the blocks himself; he made them too small, it seemed, for at the end of the first day, he had paid out his whole stock of prizes. But he had also, he found, taken more money than any other hoopla stall on the ground. The lesson that small profits and a big turnover make money was not lost on Billy. He went on making his games easier and his prizes bigger. He has been doing it ever since.

Before long he had several stalls. He painted them so vividly that they stood out from their dingy competitors. Then he bought himself and his couple of men several pairs of white overalls and had 'B' embroidered on the front. The overalls had to be clean, always. The laundry bills were more than paid for by the crowds who were attracted by the novelty of the spotless uniforms.

Butlin's ideas multiplied, and with them his profits. He gave away canaries for prizes. The old-timers shook their heads. This was perilously near to blacklegging. He bought a lorry with the money he made from the canaries, then several lorries to transport his stalls and his stock from fairground to fairground. At last he had made enough to buy the exclusive amusement rights on

the beach of Skegness, to which Hassall's famous poster of a jolly fisherman leaping along the sands, and the daring slogan 'Skegness is so Bracing,' were already attracting the hardy Midlanders. In a few years his empire had spread all round the coasts, to Mablethorpe, Felixstowe, Dovercourt, Bognor, Clacton, Bexhill, Littlehampton, Southsea, Ilfracombe, Morecambe, Rhyl, Porthcawl, to nine amusement parks in London alone, to big concessions at the annual city fairs in England and Scotland. By 1930 his employees numbered two thousand; he was spending £15,000 a year on prizes. The shoeshiny sideshow business, however, had been extended. His amusement zones brimmed over with new ideas, with petrol-driven 'dodgems' with speeds up to 30 m.p.h. and banked tracks, with switchback railways that turned stomachs over more often and more violently than anybody else's, with a mechanical ride through lighted tunnels, known as the 'Honey-moon Express,' at the end of which each couple were showered in confetti. He imported these, and similar devices from Canada, thereby assisting a new industry in the Dominion.

Butlin himself was indefatigable, travelling two thousand miles a week in the season, keeping his employees up to scratch, adjuring them to smiles and smartness, putting pep into the sideshows, changing colour schemes. He was now used to his infallible guide—his own amusement. Once he paddled himself round one of his boating lakes, wondered why he was bored. Then he realized that he had nothing to look at. So he ordered an island to be built in the middle, and trees and shrubs planted. Most men would have been content with that. Not Butlin. What could he put on the island? Animals. Wild animals. Monkeys, of course. And the sign went up: 'Ride round the lake and feed the monkeys.' And monkeys and takings flourished alike.

In the winter of 1935-36 he at last realized an ambition he had long been nursing. He acquired a hundred-acre sugar-beet field at Ingermills, just outside Skegness. Surveyors measured and marked the beet-field, and after them there arrived lorry loads of timber and concrete and bricks and workmen; by June 1936 a holiday township accommodating 2,000 people was in full swing. There were compact lines of little holiday houses, winsomely known as 'chalets'; there was a ballroom, and a great dining-hall. There were orchestras and organs and swimming pools and

shopping arcades and boxing rings; there was, in fact, for the first time in the history of British mass holidaymaking, an organization which left nothing to chance, and was so complete that there was no need for anyone who submitted himself to it to do any planning or organizing or seeking after pleasure whatever. It was all on the spot. Butlin had brought the famous Wasaga Beach, Ontario, to England's East Coast, and he charged ten shillings a day, all in.

He spent £3,000 on a full-page national advertisement and took a great deal more space in the local papers. Against advice, he wrote the copy himself. The copy was naïve, by high-class advertising agency standards; the display was crude. But it reached the people for whom it was intended, and the chalets were filled to capacity. Each year after that the Skegness camp was enlarged, had to be enlarged. In 1939 it was open from 6 April to 10 October, and at the peak period of mid-June to mid-September accommodated 5,000 people a week. The same formula exactly was applied to the creating of the camp at Clacton, where, at the height of the season, 4,000 people were housed every week. In the two camps, in that year, despite the threat and then the coming of war, a quarter of a million people spent just under a million pounds. Plans were laid for three more camps, at Filey, in Yorkshire; at Pwllheli, in North Wales; and at Ayr, in Scotland, to be opened in 1940, which would have brought the number of Butlin campers to half a million.

When the Services commandeered his camps, Butlin was undismayed. The Admiralty has kept Skegness in running order. Pwllheli has been built, for their convenience, but to Butlin's specifications. The Air Ministry did the same thing at Filey, and obligingly got out of the place in time last year for him, despite shortages of men and materials, to put in central heating, to paint and decorate the halls, plant flower-beds, fill the sunken parade-ground with water, for a swimming-pool, transport billiard-tables, cinema organs, and other Butlin indispensables from the camps which were still closed, and so to run a limited but highly successful season. Just how successful may be gathered from the reunion rally of campers which filled the Albert Hall, London, on a filthy February evening.

This year, Filey was due to open on 30 March, Clacton on 6



April, and Skegness, where the Admiralty has been rather dilatory in removing itself, on 1 June. All will remain open until 30 November! So far as Butlin is concerned, staggering has arrived. The holiday season, he says, can be seven months long. His optimism in the matter of climate, even when it is the climate of the East Coast, is backed, in the current 'handouts,' by facsimiles of newspaper headlines and articles hailing the astonishing Indian summer of 1945, and also by injunctions to take your holiday early, because 'in the spring Nature is so much in tune with the holiday spirit,' and the tariff is lower, anyway.

Why do the Butlin camps succeed, and what is their social significance? The essence of the thing, of course, is showmanship. The same factors which made Butlin 'the Dodgem King' have made him 'King of the Camps.' Just as he planned to make his 'dodgems' faster and more exciting and less liable to break down than other people's, so he planned his camps to be bigger and more comfortable and more complete than those of his rivals (and there were 200 commercial Holiday Camps in 1939). Instead of a mobile showground which packs up and changes its pitch every few days, he has created static ones. And all his pitches are close to the sea. He knows that there is one holiday habit which is ingrained in the British masses, and it is enshrined in the old music-hall song, 'I do like to be beside the seaside,' even if it is a cold, wet, and windy seaside. So all his camps have direct access to sand and sea-water, though he takes every care to see that there is plenty to do indoors, if the weather is bad.

The second overall reason why he has successfully made the transition from amusement parks to holiday camps is because he waited until he had enough capital to plan on a gigantic scale. In sheer size his camps dwarf those of his competitors; his sites are a Willow Run in their sphere; the 'luxuries' he provides are economic because they are mass-produced. Small profits but a huge turnover. It is the lesson of the hoopla stall up to date.

The third reason is the relative absence of competition. We have seen that the national hotel system (meaning by that inns, boarding-houses, road-houses, camps, hostels and rooms let in private homes as well as 'hotels' in the narrower sense) is insufficient to meet the demands in numbers which are made on it. It is

even more out of date when it comes to the question of amenities. The accommodation available is roughly divisible into three grades, the international or wealthy grade, the intermediate or moderate grade, and the popular or cheap grade. Only in the first can Britain compare with any of the Western European or transatlantic countries. Before the war, the wealthy were on the whole well provided for in London, in other cities, and on the coasts. This is a class for which Butlin does not attempt to cater. The man of moderate means was only tolerably well provided for, the great fixed-price hotels in London being the exception that proved this rule. The great majority of the population, covered by the third class of accommodation, had to put up with shortcomings which had to be experienced to be believed, with ill-chosen and unimaginatively prepared food, with cheap and poorly designed fittings and furnishings, with far too few bathrooms, and with inexpert staff. (The guest houses of the Workers' Travel Association, though they were few and far between, were an honourable exception.) From both these groups Butlin has drawn his clients. Before the war, ninety per cent of them were 'white-collar' workers, earning between £250 and £800 a year, with the preponderance in the £250-£500 class, though it was noticeable that his large car-parks were nearly always full. Last year, for the first time, there was a large influx of the artisan class. The reasons for this have been outlined at the beginning of this article. This year the maximum all-in fee at the height of the season is six guineas a week. It declines on either side to five guineas.

Butlin was able to escape, by planning and pertinacity, from most of the handicaps provided by out-of-date laws and certain hitherto limiting economic principles of hotel-keeping which created the state of affairs in the more popular holiday resorts. The licensing laws are, of course, the outstanding example of obsolete legislation. The lack of training arrangements and the depressed conditions of domestic service combined to produce serious staff problems. The limited season for holiday-making of the old-fashioned kind meant that hotel charges were higher than they should have been, in season, so that the establishments might be enabled to keep open out of season. In the majority of inns, brewery-owned for the most part, the only qualification required of a licensee was that he should bear a good character. The result

of this was usually that he lacked all other qualifications, and that catering and accommodations were woefully neglected. None of these circumstances, Butlin saw, need apply in the case of his camps. He secured his liquor licences, often an impossible thing for a newcomer to acquire in the face of local opinion, on the 'club' basis, so that campers paid a shilling membership fee with their first deposit, and non-campers were not permitted to buy drinks. There are enough bars in any Butlin camp to satisfy all thirsts but the licensing hours are strictly observed, and the bars themselves are of the 'lounge' rather than the 'spit and sawdust' type, which always allays the worst fears of the abstaining interests.

On food, believing it to be the main factor that makes or mars a holiday for the average man, Butlin concentrated his main efforts. In the first place, all his Dining Halls are glass-walled, so that they may be advertised as 'sun-traps.' Campers are not asked to sit down to long, institutional tables. The natural reticence of the Englishman when eating is catered for by small, reserved tables, seating either four or eight persons. The food is carried from the kitchens in huge, electrically heated trolleys, so that it is always hot when it arrives on the table. The kitchens are open to inspection at any time by inquisitive housewives. Before the war, the meals were on a par with those served in the hotels of the Trust Companies, and there was a stock of good wine at reasonable prices. Last year the menus were still remarkably varied, thanks to shrewd buying of fish and poultry. The early potatoes and tomatoes from the Channel Islands, which used to be a great feature, together with melons and other hothouse fruits, in the Butlin dining halls before the war, were absent, but several thousand campers rubbed their eyes one Sunday morning at Filey when they sat down to half-a-grapefruit each. The Butlin cooks make a point of little surprises. It is just as much a part of the game as serving the food hot.

In his dealings with camp staffs, Butlin applies the same rules which served him well on the fairgrounds in the distant days of the white overalls with their embroidered 'B.' Men or women, they must look smart, and they must be cheerful. These are the golden rules. Even expertness comes second to them. He pays well, but not lavishly. What his employees like is being part of the gen-

eral life of the camp. Their quarters are separate, but they sleep and eat exactly as the visitors do. And they appear in the parades and the community singing and the talent competitions: your table waitress may turn up on the concert stage playing an accordion. Actually, many of the staff are recruited from the ranks of the campers themselves. A girl who won a bathing competition early in the season at Filey last year and stayed on, as one of the staff, had become a poised and resourceful camp leader by October.

Butlin was particularly concerned last year that 'after so much sullen and ungracious treatment in cafés and buses and shops, his visitors should be impressed with a succession of smiling faces at Filey. This, he thought, would stay in their minds. And so, from the drivers of the special coaches to the kitchen boys, from the commissionaires at the gates to the women who cleaned out the chalets, the staff looked and behaved as though they, too, were having the time of their lives. And there is no reason to doubt that many of them were.

The greatest advantage which Butlin has over the competitors in the hotel system, however, is his freedom from the preoccupation of having to keep open out of season. The hotel and boarding-house keeper has little inclination to effect improvements because nothing he can do will greatly increase the casual business which is all that is done in the dead months of the year. In the season he is so full that there is no need of inducements. Butlin escapes this vicious circle. He uses the winter months for strenuous stocktaking, replanning, reconditioning, rebuilding, while the camps are manned only by skeleton staffs. His overheads are slashed to a minimum, but his goodwill is maintained by means of reunion gatherings up and down the country, at which ex-campers proudly sport their Butlin badges.

The fourth reason for the Butlin success sounds simple, but is probably the most important of all—attention to detail. The man's passion for detail greets you as soon as you open a publicity folder or fill in an application form. Both 'lads' and 'lasses'—affectionate diminutives which follow you through the camp, but also have a functional connexion—are advised exactly what clothes to bring, told not to burden themselves with sports gear

because this can be hired for a small returnable deposit, warned to bring towel and soap, but not shoebrushes because there is a shoe-shine parlour in the camp. (There are valeting shops and hairdressing saloons as well.) For the religious there is advice of Sunday services, of all denominations. For mothers there is the welcome news that playrooms with specially chosen attendants are provided where the children can be left during the day, and 'chalet-patrols' are on watch to call the parents at night should the children wake. Advertising this year is emphasizing the family angle much more prominently than before the war. The nymphs on the posters who used coyly to be dragging an athletic swain into the breakers have now become smart young mothers, with a child by each hand, splashing through rather gentler waters. A family holiday has been a rarity for six years. The war has brought about the usual crop of early marriages. And new instructions have gone out from the Butlin office to the artists.

The same thoroughness is applied to the day-to-day running of the camps. From 7.30 in the morning, when the loudspeaker at the end of each row of chalets rouses you with a song which has the refrain, 'Mr. Butlin wishes you a happy day,' to a quarter to midnight when the band in the dance hall strikes up 'Goodnight, campers,' every hour is planned and plotted. Mornings are spent in P.T. classes, children's play classes, swimming classes, field sports, bowls and putting tournaments and 'organized hikes.' Afternoons are devoted to coach expeditions, boating regattas, bathing beauty parades, football and cricket matches, children's fancy dress parades, tennis tournaments and tea dances. In the evening the pace quickens. There are whist drives, organ recitals, brains trusts, concert parties (including 'Campers' Own' concerts), modern dances, old-fashioned dances, and campfire sing-songs. At the beginning of each week formal entertainments predominate. By Saturday the campers can be trusted to make most of their own amusement. But the guiding hand is never withdrawn.

This leads into the final reason why the Butlin camps have made good, and, in particular, why they have outstripped the other holiday camps which began with many of the same opportunities. It is, in a word, discipline. Even the buildings themselves, the physical structure and layout of the camps, are disciplined

when compared with the huddle and rash of huts and caravans which too often disfigure the coastline and call themselves holiday camps. They are not beautiful, these squat, utilitarian blocks of Butlin's, but they are remarkably unobtrusive, and invariably spick and span. Among the campers themselves, order is maintained by a generous use of cajoling which disguises some, though not many, hard-and-fast rules. 'Radio Butlin,' a public address system which reaches to the furthest points of the camp, is the most efficient instrument of persuasion. It is backed by the cheerful insistence of the camp leaders in their distinctive uniforms ('The Redcoats are your Guides: the Redcoats will help you'), when it is time to eat, or swim, or dance, or close the bars. Closing the bars at night is an operation which is beautifully timed and, artistically, a masterpiece. At ten o'clock precisely the doors open at one end of the room, and a single file of redcoats, dancing the simple movements of the 'Conga' and singing a catchy tune called 'Penny on the Drum,' enters behind a bass drummer and a few other members of the orchestra. You find yourself seized round the waist and whirled into the dance by an attractive redcoat of the opposite sex. The swaying file makes its way down the room to doors at the other end. You are irresistibly propelled through them by the campers behind you, and by the gentle pressure on your waist, until you are in the middle of the dance floor. The doors into the bar are shut and locked as soon as the end of the chain has passed through. The bar is cleared in this way inside three minutes, and the dodge works night after night. They choose the redcoats, among other things, for their looks.

Encouraging the team spirit is another handy way of making people do what you want them to, and of causing them to lose their shyness at the same time. To this end, each of the dining blocks is given a distinctive name, Windsor, York, Gloucester, Kent, and becomes your 'house' for the week. Each 'house' has a staff captain and a team of instructors. These specialists organize and encourage their 'teams' in the various inter-house competitions through the week, the competitions ranging from women's swimming to men's 'knobbly knees.' Thus, the same sporting spirit which animates so many activities in the artisan class, from brass bands to whippets, through the year, is speedily mobilized, and once this has been created, and acquaintanceships have been

struck up, the strongest sanctions against bad behaviour are brought into play. 'Mustn't get drunk; it would let Kent House down.' 'Mustn't make a noise in the chalet after midnight; it would upset that nice Mrs. Smith next door.' And so on. The efficacy of this method has to be seen to be believed. Butlin prides himself on 'no drunks,' quiet nights, and wholesome morals. A Butlin camp has still to be named in a divorce case.

There is a last resort, a final sanction. It is seldom used, and when it is applied it is usually to those people who are wishing they had never come rather than to those who have made themselves objectionable. But Butlin cannot bear to see a gloomy face; it is the worst possible advertisement, and he has an efficient intelligence service which tells him if anybody is patently at odds with camp life. One of the most efficient agents of the grapevine is a massive old cook, who is seldom to be found in the kitchens, but wanders, with a genial smile, all over the camp in his high hat and apron. A report is made on Mr. and Mrs. X of Chalet Fourteen, Row C. Mr. Butlin sets his redcoats to work on them. If they fail to bring a smile to the faces of Mr. and Mrs. X, they are invited to see Mr. Butlin himself in his office. He talks to them persuasively, sympathetically. In the end they probably volunteer the view that they are not really good mixers. The upshot is that he suggests they may like to go home, with their camp fees refunded. Away they go to the station, probably in Mr. Butlin's private car, with nothing to complain of but their own bad temper. And Butlin's is itself again!

Now it is impossible to get where Butlin has got without making some enemies. There are those who declare that the camps are little better than brothels. His answer to this is an easy one, and has already been given. There are those who complain that this kind of regimentation is sinister, and may well be used one day for sinister ends. Nazifying holidays, they call it. To them the answer is partly in the obvious relish with which the majority of the campers allow themselves to be organized, though this might be used as an argument in favour of any kind of totalitarianism, partly in the complete freedom which exists to spend the whole of every day by oneself in a deckchair on the seashore, or in the surrounding countryside, if one so wishes, partly in the genial personality of Butlin himself.

The third set of critics are those to whom all holiday camps are noisy eyesores, and who claim that the peace and culture of the lands around them must be permanently affected. Dr. Thomas Jones, one-time secretary to the War Cabinet, and the committee he has formed to combat the projected Pwllheli camp, are in this class. 'The land of eagles, the altar of the snows,' old 'ere Babylon was dust,' is not 'the common muck of the world,' cries Dr. Jones. Butlin replies with down-to-earth facts. He has taken two miles of coast, nearly four miles from the nearest town, whilst within fifty miles of Snowdon there are 150 miles of coastline, and 3,000 square miles of largely unpopulated countryside. His camp will be invisible from east, west and north at a distance of more than a quarter of a mile. To the south it fronts the sea. 'Butlinism' is a word his critics use with distaste. Butlin cherishes it. It may one day find a natural place in the vocabulary of the planners who up to now have showed no sign of tackling the problem which he has been studying, off and on, for twenty-five years.



POSITIVE EUGENICS: A PROPOSAL

by C. P. BLACKER

IT HAS always been difficult to devise practical measures to further the aims of positive eugenics. A perusal of the suggestions in the standard books is apt to disappoint the reader: they are apt to strike him as unrealistic, impracticable or else insufficiently worked out in detail. The *theory* of eugenics is impressive and convincing; the *practical proposals* too often seem to peter out in triviality or futility.

Recently there occurred to me a measure upon which I would value comment and criticism. It is of such simplicity that I can hardly believe that it has not been thought of before, yet I cannot recall having seen it in print or heard it put forward. In a sentence the proposal is that financial help should be given to the parents of, say, three children recognized as of superior type, in order to assist them in bringing up a fourth child. I will try to explain this proposal in greater detail.

1. It must be a common experience of school teachers to see occasional sibships of two or three children who make an impression of being highly promising and above the average in abilities and character. The thought must occur to such teachers: "What a pity that we cannot have more children like the X's: they are a pleasure to teach; their influence in the school is good; they promise to do well in after-life; their parents are of superior type, and their home is excellent. The country could do well with more children of the X type; and it could readily dispense with the all-too-numerous children of the Y or Z type."

From THE EUGENICS REVIEW, Maurice Newfield, Editor

I have been informed by two persons with teaching experience in elementary schools that they have encountered children about whom they have felt in this way.

2. If appropriate funds were available would it not be a good thing to be able to approach the parents of the X children, if these (the parents) were still of reproductive age, and to say to them something of this sort: "We have been watching the development of your children, who have done very well in the school. In fact, they are the sort of children that we think the country could well have more of. If you have both felt that it would unduly strain your resources to have another child, would it make any difference to your decision if we were to guarantee you a sum of £—a year (say a fifth of the family's earned income) for fifteen years to help in rearing a third or fourth child?"

3. I submit that 99 per cent of parents would feel profoundly flattered by such a suggestion. Every parent is sensitive about his children. There are no forms of praise that touch parents more closely than praise of their children: and in this case the praise would redound in the most agreeable manner upon themselves. The father would feel that a tribute had indirectly been paid to his wife as well as to his children; and the wife would feel the same about her husband. The worst that could happen would be that the offer was refused, in which case no harm would have been done. If, on the other hand, the parents accepted the proposal, a guarantee would be given that the transaction would be treated as secret by the sponsoring body. The parents would be free to make the arrangement known or to keep it secret as they preferred. From the eugenic standpoint, it would be best if they did *not* keep it a secret. The principles of positive eugenics would benefit from the publicity and the discussion which would be provoked. It is, I think, conceivable that some parents would be pleased if an arrangement which so redounded to their credit were made known. Subsidies would begin with the birth of the child, or perhaps when pregnancy had been definitely established.

4. If arrangements of this sort were reached with parents of children at elementary or secondary schools (rather than with parents of children at expensive preparatory or public schools), there could be no question of class bias being involved. It could not be said that the scheme benefited primarily the upper and

middle classes—a reproach incurred by certain proposals for furthering positive eugenics. The less the earnings of the parents, moreover, the smaller would be the annual subsidy (based on a fraction of the earned income), and the less the cost of the scheme as a whole.

5. The sponsoring body might, in the first place, be some central organization like the *Eugenics Society*. But no scheme of positive eugenics could ever operate on a wide scale if it remained entirely centralized. Galton strongly advocated the formation of *local associations* for promoting eugenics. If the scheme caught on, such local associations could perform a most useful task. They could appeal for funds and subscriptions with good prospects of success. It is notoriously difficult to spend money constructively on “charitable” causes. The big trusts for the public distribution of money, such as the Nuffield, Carnegie and Rockefeller Trusts, are prepared to spend very considerable sums on obtaining the best expert advice on how funds should be allocated to the best advantage. Here would be a “charity” which would have in it nothing of the charitable, in the sense in which that word is commonly used. It is difficult to imagine any “cause” which would yield more certain and more valuable dividends.

6. It is one of the aims of a positive population policy to encourage large families, to induce parents to have three children instead of two, or four instead of three. The fourth (or third) children born in this way would stand excellent chances of being valuable assets to the nation. There would, doubtless, be occasional mishaps. The fourth child might turn out to be a Mongolian imbecile or a social failure, or he might die. But isolated instances of this character would not invalidate the general results, which would be to augment the nation’s most valuable wealth which resides in the quality of its best citizens.

7. The scheme would not depend, as do some of Galton’s proposals, on elaborate eugenic assessments whose significance is *pre-dictive*; I refer to assessments of people before they get married. The outcome of such evaluations is unknown at the time they are made, because no children have yet been born. In the cases here considered the assessment of the eugenic value of the parents would be immediately to hand. It would exist in the concrete form of the two or three children already born. The assessment

## HORIZON QUESTIONNAIRE: THE COST OF LETTERS

**T**HE questionnaire which follows was sent out by "Horizon" to a selection of writers of various types and ages. The answers of ten authors, from the many replying, are printed below. From the varied replies of all the authors concerned, the following picture emerges clearly: (1) writers do not wish to live more simply than members of any other profession; (2) the rewards of literature (as opposed to those of journalism) have not been increased to cover the added expense of living. Writers are, therefore, forced into secondary occupations which soon tend to become primary; (3) with the decline of private incomes and private patrons, the State must do more to help writers, preferably by indirect subsidy. This will not come to pass without much persuasion from the writers themselves, many of whom disapprove of the State and show no inclination to influence it.

*This results from replies received from both well-established writers and young writers who are just beginning to tackle the problem in all its enormity.*

### QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. How much do you think a writer needs to live on?
2. Do you think a serious writer can earn this sum by his writing, and if so, how?
3. If not, what do you think is the most suitable second occupation for him?
4. Do you think literature suffers from the diversion of a writer's energy into other employments or is enriched by it?

*From HORIZON, Cyril Connolly, Editor*

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5. Do you think the State or any other institution should do more for writers?

6. Are you satisfied with your own solution of the problem and have you any specific advice to give to young people who wish to earn their living by writing?

\*            \*            \*

### ALEX COMFORT

1. I cannot lay down an income scale for 'writers,' as if they were a race apart from anyone else. I live on a combined income of about £500 per annum, with a wife, and one child expected.

2. In other words, can a writer who conscientiously produces work he considers artistically worth while live on the proceeds of it? Yes, obviously he can, if he happens to write in one of the genres or styles which are commercially subsidized, but in the present world it seems to me highly inadvisable for him to do so. It means that one has to impose some sort of quota in order to live comfortably; it renders one dependent on the phases of an opinion which one ought to be forming, not obeying, and it continually dangles the temptation of subsidy-conditional-on-conforming under one's nose. I would not try to live entirely upon literary work myself, even though at the moment I probably could get paid for everything I write without being obliged to alter it. The writers who are working experimentally, or in forms such as lyrical poetry, would be quite unable to live out of their work, if only because of the relatively small volume which can be produced by one man. I have no sympathy with the Chatterton-Rimbaud fairy stories which lead writers to starve in garrets, or, the more modern equivalent, sponge on non-literary friends, because they are poets and find work too mundane. Artists are not privileged people—art is probably the human activity most deeply dependent on a responsible attitude to other people.

3. This depends upon the attitude which you adopt towards life. I believe that the most consistent and factually justifiable attitude towards life and art is Romanticism, by which I mean a philosophy based upon two postulates—that Man individually and collectively is engaged in continual conflict to assert the stand-

ards, beauty, justice, and so on, which are the product of his own consciousness, against an inert universe and a hostile environment, on the one hand, and power on the other: and that by reason of this conflict we have a definite, inescapable duty and responsibility towards all other human beings. We are afloat on a raft in a sea of mindlessness—our cargo includes all the things which consciousness regards as valuable, and there are one or two people on board who have lost their heads and are busier trying to assert their own authority than working to keep the raft afloat. We have to fight them with one hand and the elements with the other. The two fights are part of one single conflict, and for me art is the name we give to the struggle for spiritual survival and science (the genuine article, not the kitsch variety) the fight against death and our environment. One can add revolution, the fight against the human allies of the dead environment. That is why I regard scientific activity as fully continuous with artistic activity—I don't know where one stops and the next starts. I do not suggest that all artists should try to become research workers, but I think that their second occupation should be one which bears some relation to the general effort of Man, which I call mutual aid.

4, 5. My answers follow from what I have said. Non-literary activity always enriches creation subject to my provisos. As to the State, since one of the major battles of the sane man in the present period is against obedience, an enemy second only to death, I don't think the artist should touch the State or its money with a barge-pole. The same applies to commercial patronage, increasingly, from day to day. In a period of barbarism one has to be able to cut oneself off from all patronage—put yourself in the place of the European underground writers, and remember that the responsible human being is a member of a permanent underground movement who must be ready to carry on his work in the devastated landscape of the next hundred years.

6. Yes, entirely satisfied. What I have written here and elsewhere about this question is the only advice I have to offer. It boils down to this—be human, fight death and obedience, work like anyone else, since that is part of humanness, despise kiss-breeches and collaborators, and produce the work which you feel compatible with these ideas.

For your information, my own non-literary posts at the moment are M.O. in a Borough Children's Clinic and research assistant at a hospital. I am paid for the first, but not the second.

### CYRIL CONNOLLY

1. If he is to enjoy leisure and privacy, marry, buy books, travel and entertain his friends, a writer needs upwards of five pounds a day net. If he is prepared to die young of syphilis for the sake of an adjective he can make do on under.

2. He can only earn the larger sum if he writes a novel, play, or short story, which is bought by Hollywood and/or chosen by one of the American book societies, but he can add considerably to his income if he tries to publish everything he writes simultaneously in American periodicals, who all pay most handsomely. This is the only dignified way of making more money without giving up more time.

3. A rich wife.

4. If you substitute 'painting' for 'literature,' it becomes obvious that no art can be enriched by the diversion of an artist's energy. A good book is the end-product of an obsession; everything which impedes the growth and final exorcism of this obsession is harmful. All writers like to have hobbies and side interests to fill up the interval between obsessions, but this is not the same as having other employment. Compare Pope with Gray, Tennyson with Arnold, Baudelaire with Merimée, Yeats with Housman. Pope and Yeats *grew*, the two dons, despite their long holidays, remained stationary.

5. The State, in so far as it supplants private enterprise, *must* supplant private patronage. But private patronage was not based on results, and the State should not count on them either. Free gifts of money should be made to those setting out on an artistic career, and at intervals of seven years, to those who persist in one. Most of our good writers need at the moment a year's holiday with pay. Furthermore, pensions to artists and their widows should be trebled, both in value and quantity, and considered an honour, not a disgrace. All State-conferred honours to artists should be accompanied by a cash award. Furthermore, all writers and painters should be allowed a fairly large entertainment allowance, free of

tax, and one annual tax-free trip abroad. Books and framed paintings (as opposed to articles, sketches, posters, etc.) should be regarded as capital and the income from them not taxed. This would encourage the production of books rather than the better-paid journalism by which most writers now make their living. Money spent on buying books and works of art by living artists should also be tax-free. Big Business, too, could do much more for writers and painters. Shell and London Transport before the war were setting the example. Even the general public can send fruit and eggs. The State's attitude towards the artist should be to provide *luxe, calme et volupté*, and when it receives *ordre et beauté* in return, to be sure to recognize it.

6. No, certainly not. What a question! As for the young, don't become writers unless you feel you must, and unless you can contemplate the happiness, security and cosiness of respectable State-employed people without loneliness or envy. Otherwise, like most of us, you will resemble the American 'who wanted to be a poet and ended up as a man with seven jobs.'

## ROBERT KEE <sup>2</sup>

There is something inside all artists which remains themselves whatever happens, and this has nothing to do with income unless income is so low that they have neither time nor energy to be themselves.

The trouble is that few writers can be certain of obtaining regularly from their writings even the £400 a year which I regard as necessary to supply the time and energy with which to write. They have to turn to bureaucracy or journalism or some other activity which demands allegiance to society and thereby castrates them as writers. However, if there is no other way for a writer to get his £400 a year, a part-time extra job is at least preferable to a full-time one. And as a writer's business is to do with words it is obviously more sensible for him to turn to some form of word-using rather than to glass-blowing or road-making. But let him be quite clear about what he is doing. There should be no attempt to compromise between money-earning and writing. There are already too many writers who, in the higher forms of intellectual

<sup>2</sup> Winner of one of the recent Atlantic Awards.



and literary journalism, have lost sight of their real work. The principle should be: the easier the money, the more suitable the second occupation. If a writer cannot find enough to write about in what goes on all around him, without being 'enriched' by other employments, he might as well give up being a writer altogether.

But the idea of a writer having to descend to tricks to be able to follow his trade is unpleasant, and the society which tolerates it is being shortsighted merely because it means that so much less serious writing will be done. How then is a writer to get his £400 a year? I suppose publishers could be made to surrender a great deal more of it than they do at the moment. The present relationship between writer and publisher seems as absurd as if a man were to be paid pocket-money by his butler. But this is really irrelevant because even if publishers did pay fairly it would not help the writer who produces little or who is not in sympathy with his time.

Therefore the State, as the instrument of society, should make £400 a year available to anyone who wants to be a writer. This would be renewable every year at the option of the writer. The only condition would be that no other employment could be taken during that year. There would be few abuses of this system. £400 a year is not enough to tempt the crook. Moreover, any charlatan who had no intention of writing would get so bored with nothing to do on so little money that he would be eager to escape at the end of the year. Admittedly some appalling writers would be given a chance but, regarded as experimental waste, this would be a minor drawback. We are prepared to tolerate several million pounds-worth of experimental waste to produce a new atom bomb. Surely we could afford a few thousands to produce a new writer?

This £400 a year would in no way be an attempt to reward the writer for what he does. It would merely make it possible for him to write. The writer should be paid for what he is, not what he does. However, the State should also see that those writers who do produce something are more suitably rewarded than at present. No income tax should be payable on income derived from writing, though it would be payable on the basic £400. A considerable sum—say, the cost of about one afternoon at war—should be set aside every year to be distributed as prizes for poems, novels,

criticism, editorship, etc. And if anyone thinks that this State interest in literature would lead to the same results as in the totalitarian countries, I would say that our literatures would resemble each other just about as much as our State legal systems do at present.

In answer to your last question I can only say that I now enjoy £250 tax-free for one year on similar conditions to those which I have suggested. In so far as this is not £6 a week and will not continue after the end of the year, I am dissatisfied. In so far as it does give me a chance to write, I realise that I am more lucky than many writers who have already produced distinguished work.

### J. MACLAREN-ROSS

Your questionnaire arrived at an opportune moment, when I was at my wits end to know which way to turn for money. This situation is always arising with me. Hence, my answer to your first question is: A writer needs all he can lay his hands on in order to keep alive.

How much he actually should have depends on the writer himself: his tastes and habits. In other words, he should be able to live comfortably, in a style that suits his temperament. If he is a drinker he shouldn't have to worry whether he drinks beer or spirits or wine, though he shouldn't necessarily have enough to get sozzled every night. If he is a smoker he shouldn't have to buy Woodbines if he prefers Perfectos. If he wants to buy a book he should be able to buy it, not wait until it is sent to him for review or lent to him by a friend. If he doesn't drink, smoke, read books or go to the cinema, then he almost certainly has other vices, or else a wife or mistress to spend money on; well, he should have enough to spend. A writer's standard of living should be at the least as high as that of a solicitor, or any other professional man.

I am a metropolitan man and I need a minimum of £20 a week to live on, given the present cost of living; and that's *not* including rent. Whether I get it or not is another matter.

Which brings me to your second question: How can a serious writer earn this sum by writing? It's very difficult. Suppose, like myself at the moment, you have written short stories but now

want to write novels. How do you raise the sum of money needed to sit down and concentrate on writing a novel in moderate peace of mind? You can't do it except by more short stories, radio plays, or what have you, the writing of which takes up most of your time and vitiates your energy. So the novel doesn't get written, that's all.

Suppose, however, you are fortunate enough to obtain an advance of £300, you certainly spend more than that while writing the book, so you're no better off; in these days of small editions and reprints at long intervals, your advance almost covers the total royalties on your sales. Then there is the interval between delivery of MS. and the appearance of the book: nine months to a year if you are lucky, three years if you are not, as in one case I know. After that there is a further period until statements of sales go through and royalties are paid up; any attempt to obtain money in between is regarded by the publisher as an imposition, or, if he doles out some small sum, as an act of charity.

Besides, advances are rarely anything like £300. They are more likely to be, at the most, £75 or £100. The *Artists' and Writers' Year Book* is still talking about £25 as a 'suitable advance,' 'but only in rare cases can publishers be made to see this.'

Therefore a novelist is supposed to spend six months writing his book and then live for a further eighteen months or so on his advance—about £100. Plainly impossible, with the present cost of living, even for a man of the most spartan tastes.

Publishers should be made to acknowledge the higher cost of living and to pay advances in proportion; a minimum of £300 should be forced upon them, and even that will not keep anyone for eighteen months. The rates paid by editors for poems, articles, stories, are far higher now than they were before the war. Why haven't publishers raised their rates accordingly?

Until they do, the writer is compelled to exist by means, in my opinion, detrimental to his serious work. In many occupations, like film-script writing, the B.B.C., etc., he has neither the leisure nor the energy, when the day's dull work is done, to settle to what he really wants to do. I don't think there can possibly be any occupations suitable to the writer other than that of writing what he wants when he wants and of being well paid for doing so.

I don't think, either, that the State or any other institution

should support writers. Such a state of affairs would inevitably lead to limitation or control of subject-matter and theme. It is the publishers and editors, who make money and reputation out of printing writers, who should do more for the people on whose work they in turn depend for their living.

But this solution to the problem does not satisfy me, since I see no hope of the present vicious system being altered; and if I have advice to give to anyone who wants to write for a living, it is this:

(a) Don't attempt it.

(b) If you are crazy enough to try, be tough; get all you can. Price your work high and make them pay. Don't listen to your publisher's sob-stories about how little he can afford. He'll have a country house and polo ponies when you are still borrowing the price of a drink in Fitzrovia. Remember, *he* makes the money; make him give you as much as you can extort, short of using a gun or pincers. Art for art's sake is all cock, anyway.

And by the same token, please pay promptly for this contribution, because I am broke.

### GEORGE ORWELL

1. At the present purchasing value of money, I think £10 a week after payment of income tax is a minimum for a married man, and perhaps £6 a week for an unmarried man. The *best* income for a writer, I should say—again at the present value of money—is about £1,000 a year. With that he can live in reasonable comfort, free from duns and the necessity to do hackwork, without having the feeling that he has definitely moved into the privileged class. I do not think one can with justice expect a writer to do his best on a working-class income. His first necessity, just as indispensable to him as are tools to a carpenter, is a comfortable, well-warmed room where he can be sure of not being interrupted; and, although this does not sound much, if one works out what it means in terms of domestic arrangements, it implies fairly large earnings. A writer's work is done at home, and if he lets it happen he will be subjected to almost constant interruption. To be protected against interruption always costs money, directly or indirectly. Then again, writers need books and periodicals in great numbers, they need space and furniture for filing papers,

they spend a great deal on correspondence, they need at any rate part-time secretarial help, and most of them probably benefit by travelling, by living in what they consider sympathetic surroundings, and by eating and drinking the things they like best and by being able to take their friends out to meals or have them to stay. It all costs money. Ideally I would like to see every human being have the same income, provided that it were a fairly high income; but so long as there is to be differentiation, I think the writer's place is in the middle bracket, which means, at present standards, round about £1,000 a year.

2. No. I am told that at most a few hundred people in Great Britain earn their living solely by writing books, and most of those are probably writers of detective stories, etc. In a way it is easier for people like Ethel M. Dell to avoid prostitution than it is for a serious writer.

3. If it can be so arranged as not to take up the whole of his time, I think a writer's second occupation should be something non-literary. I suppose it would be better if it were also something congenial. But I can just imagine, for instance, a bank clerk or an insurance agent going home and doing serious work in his evenings; whereas the effort is too much to make if one has already squandered one's energies on semi-creative work such as teaching, broadcasting or composing propaganda for bodies such as the British Council.

4. Provided one's whole time and energies are not used up, I think it benefits. After all, one must make some sort of contact with the ordinary world. Otherwise, what is one to write about?

5. The only thing the State could usefully do is to divert more of the public money into buying books for the public libraries. If we are to have full Socialism, then clearly the writer must be State-supported, and ought to be placed among the better-paid groups. But so long as we have an economy like the present one, in which there is a great deal of State enterprise but also large areas of private capitalism, then the less truck a writer has with the State, or any other organized body, the better for him and his work. There are invariably strings tied to any kind of organized patronage. On the other hand, the old kind of private patronage, in which the writer is in effect the dependent of some individual rich man, is obviously undesirable. By far the best and least exact-

ing patron is the big public. Unfortunately the British public won't at present spend money on books, although it reads more and more and its average of taste, I should say, has risen greatly in the last twenty years. At present, I believe, the average British citizen spends around about £1 a year on books, whereas he spends getting on for £25 on tobacco and alcohol combined. Via the rates and taxes he could easily be made to spend more without even knowing it—as, during the war years, he spent far more than usual on radio, owing to the subsidizing of the B.B.C. by the Treasury. If the Government could be induced simply to earmark larger sums for the purchase of books, without in the process taking over the whole book trade and turning it into a propaganda machine, I think the writer's position would be eased and literature might also benefit.

6. Personally, I am satisfied, i.e., in a financial sense, because I have been lucky, at any rate during the last few years. I had to struggle desperately at the beginning, and if I had listened to what people said to me I would never have been a writer. Even until quite recently, whenever I have written anything which I took seriously, there have been strenuous efforts, sometimes by quite influential people, to keep it out of print. To a young writer who is conscious of having something in him, the only advice I can give is not to take advice. Financially, of course, there are tips I could give, but even those are of no use unless one has some kind of talent. If one simply wants to make a living by putting words on paper, then the B.B.C., the film companies, and the like are reasonably helpful. But if one wants to be primarily a *writer*, then, in our society, one is an animal that is tolerated but not encouraged—something rather like a house sparrow—and one gets on better if one realizes one's position from the start.

### HERBERT READ

1. How much a writer needs to live on will depend on his personal appetites, but if he is married, has two or three children, likes decent food and a comfortable house, he will need with present costs at least £1,000 a year.

2. A serious writer cannot possibly earn this sum by writing. A serious book takes two or three years to write. To earn the

necessary sum by book royalties, he would have to sell between thirty and fifty thousand copies of each book: in all probability he will sell only three to five thousand copies.

3. The most suitable second occupation for him is one which is no drain on either his intellectual or physical energy. 'A nice job in a museum,' jobs in publishers' offices and cultural organizations like the British Council and the B.B.C., are the worst possible kinds of occupation. They are too interesting: they overlap into his literary work. They create mental confusion and lead to all kinds of trivial activities which are intellectually exhausting and completely unremunerative.

Farming and small-holding, which have superficial attractions (especially for romantic writers) are physically far too exhausting. They drug the mental faculties with a poisonous fatigue.

The best kind of occupation is represented by Spinoza's lens-polishing. If I were beginning my life again, I should seek a job in the light engineering industry, especially one in which, by piece-work, the necessary amount of work could be varied according to the needs of the moment.

4. The more a writer has experience of the normal activities of human beings, the better it is for his writing. I can think of no great writer in the past who has not benefited from non-intellectual activities. I can think of many whose work has suffered from academic or hedonistic seclusion.

5. No. The State can only demoralize and debase literature.

6. I am far from satisfied with my own solution of the problem. I have tried several solutions—Civil Servant, museum assistant, university professor, editor of a magazine, and now a publisher. They have all been unsatisfactory, for the reasons given in my answer to Question 3 above. They bristle with the 'grappling-irons' which Cézanne so rightly feared, and although a strong-minded individual might be able to avoid the public responsibilities which will eventually attach to eminence in such a position, nevertheless all such jobs are by their nature 'contact jobs,' and whichever way one turns one meets the devouring pack—until in the end one is reduced to a condition of dazed indifference, the paralysis of the cornered animal.

My advice to young people who wish to earn their living by writing is at all costs to avoid following my example.

## HENRY REED

I find it easier not to answer Question 1 first. Question 2: I believe that after three or four years of practice a writer who is willing to do subsidiary literary work should be able to keep himself by writing. The position of the poet and the novelist is much the same: both have to earn their leisure to write; I think it is best, for most writers, to earn it by subsidiary writing of a civilized type; this is often extremely helpful in loosening a writer's tongue. The avenues open are obvious: free-lance journalism (especially for the 'good' provincial daily papers); commissioned reviewing (which should not be difficult to get, since reviewers are always drifting *out* of it); broadcasting, and writing for broadcasting. After a time it is wiser for a writer to confine this honourable hack-work to commissioned work. There is less risk and more money in it. I think it bad for any writer to write down; I deplore the writer who, *without enjoying it*, writes low fiction (e.g. detective stories) or dance-lyrics in order to earn money. To do so is to give play to a cheap part of the mind (present in all writers, I suspect—cf. some of James's plays) of which a writer must, in fact, strive to rid himself. There is a danger—though clearly a decreasing one—in writing for films.

3. The trouble with most secondary jobs available to writers is that you often have to write as well in order to bring your income within bearable limits. The best job is teaching, because of its incomparable holidays. It is, however, a job very exhausting to the brain, the emotions, the throat and the legs; I have found that office-work is less tiring mentally and physically, but its hours often make work in the evening impossible. A university life is ostensibly ideal for writers; but here there is the grave disadvantage of your company; with angel-exceptions (some of whom I have met) the don is by nature prejudiced against the creative artist; in no profession is the belief more strongly held that all art *ceased* just before Mummy got married; there is a Freudian explanation of this, but it remains one of those obstinate psychological cloggings which get around the bend where the brush cannot reach. Its atmosphere savages the soul. A disadvantage of *all* secondary jobs is that they are apt to become



primary. This induces in a writer self-pity and lethargy, both fatal.

4. You have but to look round to see how badly 'literature' suffers from the diversion of a writer's energy elsewhere. Very serious writers do not let their knowledge of outside *milieux* intrude unduly in their work; but minor writers are not very strong-minded about this. On the other hand, think what we should miss if Melville had never gone whaling, or Joyce Cary never been in the African Service; note, however, that they both digested these experiences before writing of them, and that they are great enough writers to order their recondite experiences into art.

5. I believe emphatically in the value of State help, and help from other institutions who will be willing to risk no returns. But the funds should *not* be administered by the donating institution, least of all by the State. Artists—cf. the Soviet novelists and our own official War Artists—are only too ready to play the whore and the toady to any institution which will pay them to do so. The universities, and particularly the provincial ones, should, I think, administer such funds; and as soon as practicable those who have benefited should help to choose future recipients. This brings me to Question 1. I think the three hundred pounds offered for one year by the Atlantic Awards is an admirable basic sum (it is, I believe, free of income tax). It is enough for various forms of existence, including, I venture to think, married life and possibly a fairly small child. £300 a year, however, still entails worry in the background; I think a youngish writer (i.e. younger than 35) can live fairly happily on £800 to £1,000 a year.

6. I am quite content with my own 'solution'. I have a good deal of advice to offer. For writers without a private income, it is advisable to face the process of a possibly slow *conversion* to a position where they have to make fewer and fewer concessions for the sake of money: i.e. it is advisable for them to put up with the more reputable forms of hack-work till they need no longer do so. When they can, they should drop hack-work like hot bricks, however easy it has become. In any case, they should be very chary of the implications of each *kind* of hack-work: specifically, and without frivolity, I would advise all young writers not

to take on regular novel-reviewing. It is one of the most exacting and lowering jobs in the world.

And poets: the poet must (but above all secretly) think of himself as a potential Shakespeare, *and not less than this*; he will rarely find difficulty in excusing to himself his occasional failures. He must manage his relations with his novelist-colleagues very carefully. The novelist is always kind to the poet, but the income-difference is always there. How true it is that every novelist would prefer to have been a poet I am not sure; I rather doubt it. At any rate the poet feels among novelists like a poor tolerated relative who has the good looks of the family but nothing else. Try to avoid a stab of anger and jealousy at the thought that even a good novelist earns about fifty times as much from his novel as you do from your poetry. Finally, no writer should live too far below his income; avoid cheap or irregular meals; and if he stays on after a party, he should try to insist on a proper bed, not the floor or the sofa.

### JOHN RUSSELL

All true writers exist in the hope of creating a masterpiece. This fact must be the central chimney and warming flue of their lives, and all other activities are, in the last resort, merely ways of buying the time which they need for their best work. All such writers write ultimately for themselves, and in obedience to inner canons of perfection; vanity, want and lust are potent local stimulants, but to the central impulse we must acribe, if hesitantly, a certain absolute, moral grandeur. This quality is held by modern society in organized disrespect; and nobody needs telling that, although good work occasionally meets with a copious financial reward, it does so only by luck or accident. Writers need, therefore, some auxiliary limb or iron lung, if they are to make a living. This can be acquired within their own field; for although few people live by literature, a great many live off it; and a life, for instance, of desultory writing for periodicals must now exert a great charm. Most other employments for young men offer a crushing load of work and a nugatory initial reward. Herbert's rectory, Stendhal's consulate and Pater's fellowship at Brasenose seem gone for ever, and leisure, even purposeful leisure, is difficult

to secure. As against this, good writing will always be rare, and will always be sought after; for the first five or ten years an aspirant with unusual or acceptable talent will earn, with relative ease, as much in this way as would be paid to him during his first years in diplomacy, at the bar, or in any learned profession. He will see himself at a bound among those whom he had hitherto regarded as Delphic arbiters of taste and judgement. His way of life is itself delightful; he can stroll up from the country on Tuesday afternoon; he need never be early for breakfast or late for the theatre; he can pass a normal life in society—or, if he wishes, a fruitfully abnormal one. Spring migrations are his for the asking; and on wet November mornings he can spare a glance, from his study window, for the dutiful bowlers of his friends as they splash along towards Whitehall.

In twenty years, however, his memory and ear will have been debauched by the habit of rapid composition to order; he will have lost the power of disinterested reading; his income will not have increased, though his commitments may well have trebled. He will never have dared to take a sabbatical year of travel and rearmament, for fear of that Tartar horde so vividly evoked by Sir Max Beerbohm—‘younger men, with months of work before them.’ His habits of mind will be known to the last twitch, and editors will dread his fixed grin or unvarying scowl. Most galling of all, he will see his beastly, dull contemporaries soar high above him; collocations of letters will hang to the tails of these comets; K.C.B., P.C., K.C.M.G., K.C., he will read. And as the junior Ministers move from N.W.3 to S.W.1, they will quietly drop him, and forbid their children to play with his. Illness will beggar him, and in perhaps another twenty years they will get him put on the Civil List, at forty pounds a year.

Writers are born, of course, with all their preservative instincts in a state of exceptional strength and tenacity. Most horny and tusky is this vital part of their being, and enclosed in a protective belt of Asian guile. Sublimest of spongers, the Duinese elegist has shown how the highest ambitions of the spirit need not exclude a deft and rapacious instinct for comfortable living; and I have heard it said, perhaps in envy or malice, that among our ranks long-sighted legacy-hunters and successful stalkers of rich wives occur in unusually high proportion. Be that as it may, I believe

that the only serious enemies of a writer's best work are within himself; all outward obstacles can be overcome, and many may even do useful service as goads and challengers; and the advice or suggestions of others count ultimately for little. Most writers work, in Aubrey's phrase, 'as boars piss—scilicet, in jerks,' and it is for the weeks and months of creative idleness that they and their patrons have to plan; but it would be difficult to convince any legislature of the realism of this view. Our task should rather be to improve the quality of the audience, and in this to begin with ourselves; it is arguable that, though the number of readers (or rather, of persons able to read) must be many times greater than at any other period in literary history, the informed audience has never, in proportion, been smaller. The State also has its duty here; for now that writers cannot hope to find the indulgent patrons or the commodious sinecures by which at one time they might have hoped to tide over their years of fasting and preparation, there is surely a case for the temporary endowment of at least a few young writers, and a stronger one for the protection of those who, in middle or later life, deserve better than indigence. If a small tax were levied upon all lending libraries, and the proceeds given to the Civil List, this might at last become a roll of honour, and its benefits be enlarged to the level of a decent subsistence.

#### D. S. SAVAGE

So many social, cultural and religious issues are raised by the question of the writer's economic position that it is impossible to deal with them in a small compass. The position of the 'clerisy' is determined by the distribution of wealth/power/privilege and by the cultural standards obtaining in society. Wealth in our racketeering society is distributed, to put it mildly, unjustly; and our cultural standards are debased. I am dead against the theory which, raising the banner of 'the artist,' would make of writers a privileged élite existing in æsthetic detachment from, and yet actual dependence upon, an enslaved and militarized people.

How much does a writer need to live on? What sort of a writer; what are his responsibilities, liabilities? But it's quite useless to discuss this matter in general terms. For myself, I am not inter-

ested in earning a living by writing. I am interested in writing. Also, I have to earn a living for myself and my family—if only to be able to continue writing. In fact, I've never yet been able to earn the barest living for the five of us out of the rewards of authorship. I have been compelled to improvise, taking up one ill-paying job or occupation after another in the vain hope of eventually getting into a position in which I should have the more leisure and mental ease to read, think, write, in accordance with my irrepressible urge to those activities. My employments and my writing have each hindered success in the other.

There is no precise answer to Question 3. Question 4 raises the point of the relationship of writing to living. In the daily struggle which is my life I am brought up against the brute facts of human existence; through experience I get to know them, to comprehend something of the very structure of existence. This knowledge is inevitably reflected in my writing at the same time as the necessity for coming to terms with the material conditions of living puts a practical obstacle in my way as a writer. Naturally I'd like the obstacle removed—in which event the struggle would be transposed elsewhere.

I am cynical about State support for writers. I don't give a damn for the State either way. No, I'm not satisfied; in fact I haven't a solution. And I'm not a bit interested in the fate of people, young or old, who merely 'wish to earn their living by writing.' I am interested only in those who wish 'to write,' and not even, very much, in all of those.

But I admit it's a problem, and the question still remains, what, under existing bad conditions, can be done to take some of the obstacles out of the way of serious writers (always remembering that there are degrees of 'seriousness') so that they can get on with the job? I have often wondered why, under the conditions of a capitalist society, no collective action has been taken to improve the writer's position—why it is that there is apparently no intermediate stage for the writer between that of outcast and celebrity, and how it is the celebrity shows so complete an unconcern with the tribulations of the outcast. If anything practical is to be done (and whatever is done is bound to be unsatisfactory), rather than State interference I should recommend the setting up of a commission by, say, the Society of Authors, to investigate

the economic position of writers—particularly young writers—and to institute a fund for the purpose of making grants for needy writers to proceed with specific works of literary value. This fund, within the unwholesome conditions of a competitive economy, might well be swollen by some diversion of the proceeds from out-of-copyright works of dead authors, period of copyright being extended by law for this specific purpose, while celebrated writers, as well as publishers and other middlemen who profit from literature in one way and another, might be bullied and shamed into making substantial regular contributions to the fund. This would be used not merely for making direct cash grants but for financing one or more journals of a solid character which would provide a market for serious work, in much the same way as some American Universities support and finance independent quarterlies. An authors' publishing corporation, even, might be developed, co-operatively run and setting an example to the commercial publishing houses in its concern for the welfare of writers and for literary standards.

### STEPHEN SPENDER

1. Of course, what a writer needs depends on many things, such as his age, whether he is married, etc. The one impregnable position is readiness to make every economic sacrifice to his vocation and, if necessary, to involve everyone round him in such sacrifice. But very few writers can do this. Allowing for travel and occasional treats, I should say an unmarried writer needs £500 or £600 a year (free of tax), if he lives in London. A married writer, if he makes his wife his cook, needs £700. However, if he has children, if he does not wish his wife to be a domestic slave and if he has any social life, he needs £1,000 a year or more.

Directly he needs as much as this, difficulties of income tax arise, for he needs actually to earn £1,500 a year. Writing is a social occupation and in London he will find that entertaining is one of his chief expenses. If he were a business man, the government would pay for his lunches with his colleagues, but as he is an artist, entertainment of other writers will not be recognized as a legitimate expense of his profession.

2. Try to earn £1,000 a year or more from writing today and

see what happens. If you write books your publisher will not have paper to print more than 5,000 copies, which will bring you in £250 to £350. This means you must either write four to six books a year, or you must turn to journalism. Assuming you are paid, on the average, £3 3s. for 1,000 words, you will have to write 333,000 words a year to gain £1,000. Myself, I find that if I write three or four articles a week (*a*) I become irritable, (*b*) I get into a condition in which I find it very difficult to read seriously, (*c*) least of all can I read what I write myself. I can write an article far more easily than I can bear to read it, for the purpose of proof correcting, (*d*) there follows a general disgust with my own ideas, my way of thinking and talking, and (*e*) a tendency to write more and more journalism and less poetry, because I feel unworthy to write serious work.

3. I can only state the problems in general terms. These are (*a*) to avoid expressing merely in words on a level which lowers one's standards, (*b*) to avoid exhausting oneself physically and/or mentally, (*c*) to avoid becoming absorbed in some task which eventually becomes more important to one than one's writing, (*d*) to avoid being forced to play some role in life—such as an official or a pedagogue or an important person—which usurps one's creative personality.

The safest part for a writer to play in a job is a return to childhood. Do some job which enables one to learn something which will be useful in writing. Accept the fact that one is once again the stupidest boy in the class, the backward son in the family. One's best relationship with one's colleagues is for them to think of one as slightly mad but full of good will. Be a cog and allow oneself to be gently ground between the heads of departments. Reassure people by allowing them to think that one is distinguished without one's ever menacing their own position. For God's sake never be in a position of responsibility and have no ambitions. Do not seek honours and do not refuse them. One should aim at being a rather superior and privileged office clown who excites no one's envy, and on whom one's colleagues project a few fantasies. One encourages all this by arriving always a little late (but not too late). Prepare for the worst, when the boss shows you his (or his wife's or his son's) poems. Pretend to like them, ask for a testimonial and resign immediately when this happens.

4. This depends entirely on the quantity of the writer's energy. If he has the energy to do another job and to write, I cannot help thinking that his writing gains by a contact with the machinery of ordinary life. A scientist, a managerial leader or a statesman who realizes an idea which has to pass through the whole machinery of a modern organization, is creative in a way, parallel to an artist who overcomes technical problems in order to state an idea in his particular medium. If one can retain the sense of a creative attitude in one's environment and not be crushed by a routine, one will learn much from ordinary work. Myself, I think that the best and most serious modern literature suffers from unworldliness. Literature should be made of the same worldly muck as are the historic plays of Shakespeare, the courtly drama of Racine and of Lopez de Vega, the materialistic novels of Balzac and the Duchy of Parma in *La Chartreuse de Parme*. Byron was the last worldly poet. What we want is a fusion of Byron and Blake.

5. Only in the way of recognizing and protecting the writer's professional position, by providing paper for modern books, giving creative writers the travel facilities of journalists, allowing the social contacts of writers with their colleagues to count as tax-free business expenses, etc.

6. At the moment I am happy because I work with an intelligent and sympathetic international group of people who, not being English, expect of me what I can give, do not make me feel guilty and have an unobtrusive recognition of my value in their work and also in my own which has a certain value for them. I am not unpatriotic, but I fear that the mainspring of English industriousness is a sense of guilt and for this reason the position of writers who have to work for their living in this country is particularly difficult. They are forced into the dilemma of feeling they have to choose between two kinds of work. In France, this is not so, with the result that many French writers combine official positions with writing.

I advise the young writer to be perfectly honest with himself about the all-important problem of how he is expending his energy. The only rule in this work is to know what you want to do and do it, at all costs. If you can do other things as well, you will probably gain by it. But if you can't, you're *foûtu*.



## THEATRE

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### SHAKESPEARE AND STRATFORD

by STEPHEN POTTER

**B**Y THE END of 1924, in the course of Eng. Lit. at Oxford, I had "done" Shakespeare with some academic thoroughness. But talking it over with my friend M., we realised that although we had seen two or three Hamlets, and at least one performance of the dozen most famous plays, we knew much more about Shakespeare in the footnotes than we knew about Shakespeare on the stage. For a mild bet, we set out to discover which of us could see the twenty-odd remaining plays first.

In the nineteenth century such a pilgrimage would have taken a lifetime. My friend M. had finished his within three years. I myself lost the race by one play only. And although we were helped by the fact that the Old Vic was in the middle of its systematic performance of the entire Shakespeare canon, M. assures me that, with the exception of *Titus Andronicus*, he could have seen every play in the same period without the Old Vic's help.

We realised that, with the Old Vic and the Birmingham Rep., the Stratford Memorial Theatre had been our chief source of supply. What we did not know was that before Old Vic Shakespeare had begun, the Stratford Theatre had started a new tradition. In 1910 Shaw wrote his preface to the *Dark Lady of the Sonnets*. It is an attack on the subjection of Shakespeare to uncritical Our-English-Heritagism and to bardolatry in general. But Shakespeare would have had this just cause of complaint against us, he says. We go to see not Shakespeare's plays, but X and Y's performances in them.

From THEATRE TODAY  
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Now all this is changed. Plays which do not necessarily offer great acting opportunities are part of our repertory. A new and delicious taste for unfamiliar Shakespeare has grown up, with its sense of personal discovery and adventure. We see *Troilus* or *Measure for Measure* in an atmosphere of delighted attentiveness very different from the respectful somnolence which broods over the spectacle of Ophelia's madness, the casket scene in *The Merchant of Venice*, or the witches in *Macbeth*.

Now that Stratford is beginning again after the war, we can see more clearly what it has stood for. The bad side of Stratford, i.e. Shakespeare & Co. Ltd., has been much exaggerated and scarcely now exists. Visitors are not cheated by rapacious landlords, there are too few rather than too many picture postcards, there are no half-timbered telephone kiosks, and a smile at any "Shakespeare Radiogram Co." may be turned against you in a town where there is more than one Mr. Shakespeare still in the district and where in the eighteenth century the most famous holder of the name was the proprietor of a famous tavern. There are, of course, a certain amount of irrelevancies in the museums: the Christmas supplement illustrations of the Seven Ages of Man or Shakespeare's Life in Watercolour are somewhat enervating, but some of the odds and ends are valuable. Every actor goes to see the death mask of Ellen Terry, which is in the same little room with a remarkably interesting portrait of Coleridge which I have never seen reproduced in any book. And it is worth recording that the guides in the various museums, birthplaces, etc. are tactful, intelligent and self-effacing.

But the greatest attraction of Stratford is of course the country and the villages. One can wander along the banks of the Avon towards Shottery, and the soles of one's feet will tingle with the knowledge that Shakespeare often walked along that path not so very long ago. On the road to Evesham one sees the signpost to Dumbleton, and remembers the reference to "Master Dumbleton's slops" in *Henry IV*. Even Shakespeare annotations begin to mean something. There is still a Lucy living at Charlchote, and on June 1st the park was opened to the public under the National Trust. And one has only to go a hundred yards off the beaten tract to be in the thick of the kind of rich country which, because Shakespeare was the first to describe it, we always think of as

being English country and English scenery. Then back in Stratford once more there are the New Place Gardens, the old bridge, not new even when Shakespeare was a boy, and although plenty of the visitors are pilgrims to the birthplace, most of them are local farmers coming "into town" to talk farm business.

By the river is the theatre, on its east side at any rate covered with wistaria and half-screened by poplars. This essay in 1930 red-brick functionalism looks more mellow now, and much less true to its first unkind nickname, the "jam factory." And underneath the picture gallery is a compact little Shakespearean library where, with books and pictures and a full account written by M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin, we can trace a little of the Shakespeare tradition at Stratford.

The hundred years after Shakespeare's death was an age when English writers were little honoured, nor were references to their lives thought worth preserving. But except for the two Puritan decades, the name and tradition of Shakespeare was kept at Stratford with remarkable care even during those Restoration times when elsewhere in England Shakespeare was regarded as a barbarian whose plays had to be rewritten before they could be performed. Stratford has always been trying to provide a home for the memory of Shakespeare, but for a very long time its efforts were extraordinarily unsuccessful. At first there was much more bardolatry than love of Shakespeare about it.

The complete records are full of fascinating side issues and curiosities of literary history. Here began not only the setting up of Shakespeare's character as permanent and unquestionable No. 1 of English Literature, but the origins of all the birthplace ana, of the memento industry, and of that worship of British authors that was unknown before the eighteenth century. There is the story of the vandal who cut down Shakespeare's mulberry tree in 1752, an act which seemed to set all these processes in motion. The story of the man who bought up the wood of the sacred tree and carved it into presentation snuff boxes and tobacco stoppers, which seemed themselves mysteriously able to breed toys and table-tops, until, as Washington Irving remarked, Shakespeare's mulberry tree acquired as extraordinary a power of self-multiplication as the wood of the True Cross. Then there is the story of the visit of David Garrick, and the absurd rococo-

classical pageant of 1769, with its procession, and Garrick's Ode delivered by the author in the Rotunda, a performance of Handel's *Judith*, conducted by Dr. Arne, and a fancy-dress masquerade, all recorded for the *London Magazine* by Boswell, who came to the ball dressed as a Corsican bandit, with pistols in his belt, and "Paoli and Liberty" written on his cap in letters of gold. And all was accompanied of course by the steady rain which in England invariably falls on state occasions—accompanied by everything, in fact, except any recitation from or performance of one of Shakespeare's plays.

The rain which dampened Garrick's Jubilee seemed to haunt Stratford celebrations for the next hundred years. In the bicentenary year of 1816 six cannon were let off, and between the showers there was a grand display of fireworks. Later a Shakespeare Club worked itself up into intermittent bursts of enthusiasm. Shakespeare Odes were delivered in blank verse. A small theatre was actually built over New Place Garden, and here for the first time the compliment to Shakespeare was extended to include the acting of highly cut and suitably improved versions of one or two of his plays. But the theatre was a failure. The tercentenary celebrations of Shakespeare's birth fell equally flat. A Grand Pavilion was erected. Mr. Sims Reeves came down to sing in the *Messiah*. There was a performance of *Twelfth Night*, with the final song cut out to make room for a killing little farce by Sothorn called *My Aunt's Advice*. But Phelps was offended because he hadn't been asked to act before Fechter. Fechter refused to come. The grand aeronautic display was a fizzle because Mr. Coxwell's balloon refused to leave the ground, and Wombwell's menagerie, tethered on the outskirts of the town to catch the overflow from the crowds, packed up for want of customers. Once more, the celebration was a failure.

The first man clearly to realise that a mixture of Jarley and Vincent Crummies could never be the best way to celebrate Shakespeare was one of those "local nobodies," as he called himself, who decided to rush in where the Somebodies had so consistently failed—Charles Flower, prosperous brewer of Stratford, and founder and first patron of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. Flower found the money, chose the site, ("not among hurrying cabs and ringing pavements," as Yeats wrote when he came,

"but in a green garden by the riverside"), turned the festival into an annual event, and found a leading actor, Barry Sullivan, who was capable of collecting a good cast. Above all, within five years of the opening of the theatre, on April 23rd, 1879, plays as unfamiliar as *Measure for Measure* or *Love's Labour's Lost* or *The Comedy of Errors* were acted. In spite of much eyebrow lifting and almost no financial help from the rest of the country, on the very spot where the rococo-classical celebrations had failed, the little nineteenth century theatre, built in a mixture of Gothic and Tudor and God knows what, had succeeded.

To the generation who were in their twenties in the nineteen-twenties, the story of Shakespeare production at Stratford has been the story of Benson and Bridges Adams. We can read, now, about the success of the Edward Compton company in the eighties. Indeed, Compton is no historical abstraction to us who have been fortunate enough to see his precision and the perfection of his diction reproduced in his daughter, or to hear more than an echo in his son Mr. Compton Mackenzie of his power of character acting and miming. We see portraits of other great visitors in the picture gallery—Genevieve Ward, Ellen Terry, Forbes Robertson—but in the early nineteen twenties, when we saw the new post-war productions of Bridges Adams, we thought in the ignorance of our oversimplifying minds that this was a new reign, substituting a new and more vital principle for the outworn method of Sir Frank Benson.

At Oxford we had seen perhaps the famous Benson in his decline, rather mannered, rather disappointing, in a performance of *Coriolanus* cut to half its length, because Benson was too old to do justice to the battle scenes. Difficult for us to realise that in the old days, Benson could leap about the stage with the agility of an athlete and the grace of a fine actor, in a way which would have made Mr. Olivier seem slow and static by contrast. In the Benson productions, an absurd nineteenth century fashion of scenic realism was still in the ascendancy. Real gondolas were dragged shakily across the stage in the *Merchant of Venice*, and in the Forest of Arden it was the custom to see a certain rather dusty old stuffed stag, specially presented by the Lucy family. Full stages mean slow productions, slow productions mean deep cuts. We did not realise the qualities of these faults—the extraordinary

care which made the Benson Company so effective as a training school, so that when we read the names of his cast it seems to us that he was always surrounded by famous names because they were so often names which became celebrated later.

Mr. Bridges Adams certainly reversed the faults of the Benson productions. His principal aim was the restoration of the full text. No scene, though lines from it might be omitted, was ever cut entirely. And to achieve this result, he gave us a set which was able to suggest the background lightly and clearly, without realism, yet without being fanciful or intrusively modern. To save time, he invented a succession of devices whereby scenes could be struck quickly. Sometimes he achieved the impression of a full and varied stage by lighting alone, or by the introduction of some particularly striking costumes at the right moment. Surely we tend to underestimate the work of Mr. Bridges Adams now, just as we underestimated Benson in 1920. It is said of him that he was so keen on the stop-watch that some of the detail of production, particularly the detail of acting, was left too much to itself. But after making all allowances for the enthusiasm of those post-last-war days, it is difficult to talk too strongly of the clarity and force of these plain uncut versions and the strength with which Shakespeare seemed to shine through the plays. It was not a production for the great star actor, but the lucid and very human performances of such Benson-trained artists as Balliol Holloway and Dorothy Green seemed to us perfection in this setting.

All this belongs to the twenties, and after the twenties, with the destruction by fire of the old theatre and the building of the new, there were no more "reigns," no more consistent sequences of production under one producer. Most of us know the advantages and disadvantages of the new theatre, the insidious comforts of the bars and the seats in the building where all but the unfortunate actors are well bestowed. A theatre, like a ship, has a personality stronger than that of any human being. It would not be true to say that this Stratford Theatre's heart is as cold as the heart of the Haymarket or the Theatre Royal, Bristol, is warm. No doubt age will soften its character; but at present there is an extraordinary hollowness and ghostliness about the relations between the actors and the audience. Maybe it is, as the theatre architects say, a question of mathematics; maybe it is true that the specification

on which the architects were supposed to base their plan included every detail which their theatrical advisers had supplied, and left out the question of sight lines, the basic by which all detail must be conditioned. In 1928 the partisans of the Elizabethan method of production were at their most fanatical. In fact it is said that in order to prevent future generations from going back on their wishes they anchored the apron stage to the foundations with steel and concrete. This involves, of course, a gap between the proscenium arch and the front row of the stalls, which would scarcely matter if the actors could make periodical friendly contacts with the audience by coming down to the front of this lower stage. But if they do so, then the front of the circle cuts off the view and they move about like the ghost of Duns Scotus in the library of Merton College, visible only from the knees upward.

The present season at Stratford reminds us of some of these faults and some of these advantages. The first plays—*Henry V*, *Cymbeline*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Tempest*—make a typical well-chosen Stratford balance between the more and the less familiar. A new policy under the direction of Sir Barry Jackson is giving us the special interest of seeing a different producer for each play. Mr. Nugent Monck's production of *Cymbeline* is clear and straightforward. Valerie Taylor is a tender Imogen and beautifully suggests the great human virtues—is it Coleridge who says this?—of loyalty, lovingness and singleness of purpose which shine through such women characters in Shakespeare. The new and promising actors are here too. Paul Schofield is a name we shall know better when all that remains of this production is a programme stuck in a scrap book. David King-Wood as Iachimo speaks the handsome verse finely. He only fails in the scene in the bedroom where the acoustics of the theatre force him to declaim his lines in a voice which implies that the still sleeping Imogen must have indulged, even before Act IV, in that treble dose of veronal. There is a new producer altogether for *Love's Labour's Lost*, Mr. Peter Brook, who brilliantly over-produces this difficult play. Too little care is given to the poetry lying always just beneath the surface, too much to the fantascification of the already exaggerated minor characters, although their complicated revels, when they are suddenly hushed, are made to give fine dramatic point to the entrance of the bringer of bad news in Act V. The

plays needs, and gets, plenty of music. But the right balance in the use of incidental music and its cueing with speech is often less carefully studied in the theatre than it should be. In the *Tempest*, Miranda is far too young and inexperienced to be able to suggest youth and inexperience. Mr. Robert Harris, another fine speaker of verse, suggests a Prospero of faded and occasionally irritable omniscience, but never quite achieves the ripeness which seems to lie behind his words.

But the critic of Stratford must always remember that Stratford itself is the chief source of his standards and the friendly training ground of his appreciation of Shakespeare on the stage.



T R A V E L  
A D V E N T U R E

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A TRIP TO TIMBUCTOO

*by* DONALD GRAHAM

A HARLEY STREET specialist whose sleek appearance implied that he had never had a financial worry in his life—which is probably why he set up as a specialist in the ailments that follow in the wake of prolonged anxiety—advised me to go on a cruise round the world. My total wealth was something under six hundred pounds, and I laughed, probably for the first time for months. The eminent physician was horrified that anyone should so react to his considered opinion and I was shooed out of the house by a scandalised receptionist.

But the specialist was right. To get out of England, right away from everything that could remind me of three nerve-racking years, was essential. Spain, I thought, would be rather nice; or perhaps somewhere in the Balkans. I signalled to a taxi in Wigmore Street and told the driver to take me to a certain firm of travel agents.

What put the idea in my head, I do not know, but by the time I reached my destination I had decided to go to Timbuctoo.

The clerk of whom I demanded the necessary tickets looked nonplussed. He hemmed and hawed, and finally advised me to book through to Bucharest and then make use of local transport. Trying not to smile, I assured him that there must be a more direct route than that. He picked up a telephone and spoke to some unseen authority, who presumably reprimanded him for his faulty geography and recommended that I should go by plane

*From* BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE  
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to Delhi' and up through Kashmir. That was too much for me altogether, so I booked through to Paris. After all, Timbuctoo is French, so presumably French people would know how to get there. Two Paris travel agencies were rather better than the London agents—they did at least know that Timbuctoo was in Africa, although one of them thought it was in Madagascar and the other swore that it was in the Cameroons, and that I should go to Duala. In the end it was a Major in the French Colonial Army who told me how to get there.

"Go from Dakar to Bamako, on the Upper Niger," he told me. "Then you go down the river by paddle-steamer. Timbuctoo is beautiful: you will love it."

Three weeks later I arrived in Bamako and found that I was lucky enough to be allotted a place on the weekly train leaving for Kulikoro next day.

Kulikoro is the river port from which the boats sail down-river for the interior. I had expected a busy, noisy little place, rather like those on the great rivers of China. Kulikoro was a collection of mud huts, and there was a landing-stage of sorts. Nobody seemed to take the least interest in my arrival: nobody hurried, and the few natives who were doing any work continued working in time with a low rhythmic chant. Kulikoro, however, possesses a colossal hotel perched on the summit of a steep sun-baked hill. There was no kind of conveyance and the only way to get there appeared to be on foot. The stationmaster got a boy with two donkeys to carry my baggage and we set off for the hotel. Never has a mile and a half seemed so long. The hotel has only one entrance and that leads straight into the bar—a piece of good business psychology on the part of the proprietor. The reception office is the far end of the bar-counter. I entered my name and passport number on the *fiche*. The dusky clerk noted the word 'British' and looked up.

"Double whisky-soda?" he inquired.

"Please," I replied.

On learning that the cost was approximately thirty-two shillings, I very nearly needed another! I stayed there for four days and have rarely been more comfortable or better looked after.

I embarked on the paddle-steamer on the fifth day and we

sailed the same evening. The journey down-river took ten days and was boring in the extreme. To the south and astern we could still see forest-clad hills and dense vegetation, but on the northern bank the country became flatter and flatter and more and more bare.

At length we could see Kabara, the landing-stage for Timbuctoo and the Southern Sahara in general. We tied up alongside in a furnace-like noon when the sky was like brass. My baggage was dumped ashore on the sand. Half a dozen natives who disembarked at the same time were greeted by friends and vanished in various directions. The crowd of touts and *chasseurs* that normally make the solitary traveller's life a burden were conspicuous by their absence. The few natives who were hanging about the landing-stage were quite incurious about me. I probably looked rather forlorn, and by-and-by a black youth came up and spoke to me in excellent French. Was there anything he could do to assist? Had I expected friends to meet me?

No, I told him, I was not expecting friends, but which was the track for the main gate to the city? And was there no form of conveyance?

The boy laughed, Timbuctoo lay five miles to the north and out of sight. The only way to get there was on horseback. But if I had no friends in Timbuctoo, where did I propose to stay? At the hotel, I told him. But there is no hotel, he exclaimed. No one ever comes to Timbuctoo. Of what use would be a hotel? It would be a thing of the most foolish.

This item of information upset my calculations. No one had thought of telling me all this in Paris, Casablanca, Dakar, Bamako, or on the boat. I explained, and the lad nodded thoughtfully.

"Come to my father's house and drink tea with us," he invited. "Afterwards I will ride to the city with you. My uncle is a merchant there. He owns several houses. If Allah wills, one of them may be vacant and you could rent it. I will arrange a horse for you and a boy with donkeys for your baggage."

The sun was definitely towards the west when we left his father's house, where I had been respectfully and hospitably entertained. The sand was deep and soft, so we travelled slowly. We had covered about three-quarters of the distance when we

paused on the crest of a low ridge of sand-dunes, and my companion pointed.

*"La voilà, Timbuctoo."*

I cannot now be sure what I had expected Timbuctoo to look like—probably white with domes and minarets and an atmosphere of mystery, like cities I had seen in Morocco and Southern Algeria. But it was not like that at all. It was low and flat. No towers broke the skyline, and so perfectly did its colouring match that of the surrounding desert that it was almost impossible to pick out specific buildings. Timbuctoo lay sprawling over the desert at my feet and in the reflection of the sun it appeared made of gold vaguely tinged with purple.

We rode into the city through a great gateway, crossed a deserted market square and entered a dim street so narrow that I could touch the low mud walls of the houses on either side. We turned so many corners that I lost completely any sense of direction. At length we halted outside a big square doorway on which my companion kicked with his bare toes.

A moment later the gate was unbarred, and as it swung open we rode into a spacious courtyard. Servants ran forward to hold stirrups and bridles as we dismounted. The boy's uncle, who bore a remarkable resemblance to the portraits of King Charles II, was most hospitable, but asked me to excuse him for a moment. The boy told me, with a grin, that his uncle had just married a thirteen-year-old girl and wanted to chase her back to her private apartments before letting me loose.

I had arrived in Timbuctoo. I could scarcely believe that thirty-seven days previously I had been a nervous wreck tottering along Harley Street.

Timbuctoo is a small isolated city of about five thousand regular inhabitants. Everything is built of hard beaten earth. All the roofs are flat; all the parapets square. Most of the houses are but one storey high with smooth, unbroken, windowless walls, with which the doorways are flush. The narrow streets wind and wander aimlessly from one market place to another. Timbuctoo is silent, strangely silent. There are no carriages, no carts, no motor-cars; no proper roadways and no footpaths. In the thick sand of the alleys and lanes the donkeys and unshod horses make

no more sound than the bare feet of natives. Only in the market-places are there crowds, bustle, noise, or music.

Next morning my host accompanied me to the Bureau of the French District Commissioner. I found him sitting on the verandah outside his office, very much 'off duty,' and clad in nothing but a *képi* and a hideous pink-and-green check towel. He was busy at an easel, painting a really first-class portrait of a grey-bearded, beetle-browed Moorish bandit whose wrists and ankles were manacled with a fine steel chain. A half-caste gendarme leant against the wall, smoking and keeping a watchful eye on the prisoner.

The Commissioner greeted me by flourishing a paint-brush. On learning that I was not in a hurry, he waved vaguely in the direction of a chair and told me to help myself to drinks.

"I can't get the expression of this old So-and-so's lips right," he grumbled. "But I shan't be long now. Anyway, it's Sunday."

About twenty minutes later the sitting came to an end and the prisoner was marched off by the gendarme after having been rewarded with a pint of sour milk.

The Commissioner came across to me with a bunch of paint-brushes in one hand and a pot of spirit to wash them with in the other.

"Now, sir, what can I do for you, and why, with the whole of the British Empire to choose from, do you want to arrive in a God-forsaken dump like Timbuctoo in one of the worst French Colonies you could find?"

After leaving the Commissioner's Bureau I made my way back to my host's house. He told me that he had gone round his vacant properties that morning and had found that one of the few two-storeyed houses in Timbuctoo was vacant and in better repair than he had thought. There were seven rooms and a separate annexe for the kitchens and servants. The rent, he added apologetically, was somewhat high—nearly seven shillings and sixpence a month—but it was one of the best houses in Timbuctoo. He had also found me a good, reliable, honest 'boy,' who would be responsible to him that I was not too grossly overcharged in the markets and who would not steal—much. The servant he had chosen for me was a handsome, smiling, ebony statue of about fifteen, who spoke French of a sort. His name was Mahmoud ben Salih.

I asked him if he was willing to work for me. He said, "Yes, please," and added the gratuitous information that "It's a long, long way to Tipperaree." I never managed to ascertain how he came by that snippet of geography, but he brought it out, like a doxology, at the end of most of his speeches.

He escorted me to the house and examined it critically.

"*Pas mal*," was his only comment. We went back for my baggage and moved in during the afternoon.

Mahmoud spent the first couple of hours on a scorpion-hunt, while I unpacked and put up my camp-bed. He went round prodding the cracks and crevices in the walls and floors with a treacle-covered knitting-needle. When a scorpion followed the needle into the open Mahmoud dispatched it with a smack from an old sandal.

When he expressed himself satisfied with results we went out into market to buy meat, vegetables, flour, and other commodities. I also bought some grass and wool rugs and leather-work cushions. (These are now in the University Museum at Oxford.) Mahmoud urged me to buy three camel saddles and explained, under difficulties, that with very little work they can be converted into quite comfortable chairs. Accompanied by half a dozen small boys carrying our purchases we returned to the house, where three naked black urchins awaited us with a number of red earthenware water-jars. These were beautifully moulded with graceful curves and each was decorated with white and yellow scroll-work round the neck. The largest held about three gallons. Mahmoud examined them carefully, tapped them with his knuckle to make them 'ring,' and pronounced them as satisfactory. Good jars, he explained, cost a bit more than the bazaar article, but it was money well spent.

"How much are these?" I asked him.

"Sevenpence," he replied. Even then I do not doubt that he had a rake-off.

I found both the climate and life in general to be comfortable. From noon till about three in the afternoon it was hot, but by no means unbearably so. For the first week or so the nights were pleasantly warm. Then there was a change in the moon and I had my first experience of 'Timbuctoo frost.' One needed several blankets and a sweater to keep warm—this applies equally to

natives and Europeans—yet the thermometer scarcely alters. I have not yet found a scientist who can explain these phenomena and it puzzles the Meteorological service. This mysterious cold lasts four weeks, and as soon as the new moon appears the nights are warm again.

One thing that added considerably to my appreciation of Timbuctoo was a small lake on the outskirts of the town where I could go for an early morning swim. The scene at sunrise always fascinated me: native boats and canoes that had come down-river from the interior during the night, the crews squatting or sleeping round tiny fires that put a tang of wood-smoke in the river-mists; bales of vivid green grass and baskets of bright-coloured fruit from well-watered pastures and gardens across the river; the Faithful at their prayers, bowing towards Mecca and muffled in voluminous cloaks, strange mysterious shapes in the half light.

Day and night the air was absolutely dry. After nine o'clock in the morning, laundry would dry in a matter of minutes. It almost required a hammer to break the crust of yesterday's bread. Matches burned themselves out almost before one had time to light a cigarette, and the tobacco was so dry that the cigarettes tasted horrible.

Food was both plentiful and cheap. A half-leg of mutton cost fourpence; chickens cost a penny or three-half-pence each; milk—goat's, sheep, or camel's—was unlimited and cost about a penny a gallon. The thought of camel's milk somewhat revolted me until I screwed up my courage to taste it. I found it superb, as indeed Mahmoud had assured me it was—richer and creamier than any obtained from a herd of pedigree Jerseys. Eggs were so cheap that they were almost given away. Onions, carrots, radishes, lettuces, turnips, and tomatoes could usually be bought in the markets at such infinitesimal prices that the green-grocery bill for Mahmoud and myself cannot have exceeded twopence-half-penny a week.

At the end of a month I felt better and stronger than I had done for years.

Sometimes the District Commissioner would lend me a horse and I would accompany him on his visits to outlying villages. He was equally facile with both oil and water colours, and it was rare indeed for him not to make a sketch during these journeys.

I bought four of his landscapes, and he made me a present of three more.

One day we were riding towards a Moorish settlement about ten miles out of the town when we heard some natives singing in chorus. They were somewhere to our left and we steered our horses in their direction. The party turned out to be Hereditary Cleaners of Wells, an ancient and hereditary trade that is gradually dying out. The function of the men is to descend to the bottom of wells and water-holes that are fed by underground springs and clear away the accumulation of mud and underwater weed that collects in the mouth of the inlets and so blocks the flow of water.

We reached the well on which they were working at just the right moment. One of the men was on the point of going down. He was standing on a rope ladder waist-deep in the water and was bending forward with his hands gripping the edge of the well. The chief of the party was slapping the man's spine and shoulders in a kind of massage, and was muttering prayers and incantations in the intervals of chanting verses from the Q'uran. Suddenly the diver took a series of deep breaths and vanished feet first into the water. He had, of course, no sort of diving helmet, and I was curious to see how long he could remain under water, doing heavy manual labour in a space more confined than even a coal seam.

He stayed down for close on five minutes by my watch. When I expressed astonishment to the Commisisoner he assured me that this was not exceptional. A good diver, he said, can remain under water for eight minutes. I find that takes a lot of believing. The weeds and silt from the bottom of the well are put into a bag tied round the diver's waist and emptied out when he returns to the surface.

The water at the bottom of these desert wells is nearly always as cold as ice, even when the temperature is 120° F. in the shade. This sudden transition from extreme heat to extreme cold and then back again to heat would kill any normal man. When the diver reappears he is caught and held by the others, lifted out of the well bodily, and then thumped and prodded and prayed over until he recovers his breath. Then they wrap him in a hot blanket and lay him down beside a roaring fire, where he remains for about an hour. The diving and work under water exhausts them,



mines from which the salt is brought are four hundred miles to the north in the barren wastes of Taudeni, and are the property of the Tuáregs. Salt-mining was the basis of Timbuctoo's former great prosperity, but it was an entirely artificial industry. Taudeni is not fit for human habitation, and the negro mine workers, who were taken and held there by force, usually died within a year from the effects of brackish water and 'salt madness.' It is doubtful whether Zanzibar at its worst or the West Indian plantations at the close of the seventeenth century ever held horrors worse than the slave labour of the Taudeni mines. The coming of the French has curbed the power of the slave-raiding Tuaregs, and the conditions in the mines today are no worse than the nature of salt-mining necessitates. Taudeni is no longer the unparalleled hell it was a short generation ago.

The Commissioner told me that to travel to and from the mines with the caravan was an unforgettable experience, and a constant source of joy to an artist. He gave me a most graphic word-picture of the line of hundreds of camels moving steadily across desolate golden-reddish wastes; of men burnt black and blistered by sun, every nerve and muscle aching for water that could not be spared until nightfall, when all along the line a thousand tiny fires would flicker into life to boil the water for the sweet scalding tea without which the desert Arab could not live. Always, day and night, there was the risk of attack by desert brigands.

These outlaws, almost as unconquerable as the wastes in which they live, are a very real menace. They are swift and fearless in their attacks. Not only do they move in extremely mobile groups, but in the course of generations they have acquired a resistance to thirst greater even than that of the tribes dwelling in the Ahaggar. Although the French authorities provide armed *méharistes* for the protection of the caravans, they are heavily handicapped against an enemy able to exist for two, or even three, days without water in a temperature of 126° F. in the shade.

At last the caravan arrived. It was the Tuaregs with it who interested me. They were like a survival of a forgotten age—as indeed they are. For centuries they have lived remote from civilisation in a lost corner of the world. These men with the salt caravan wore armbands of polished stone. They carried steel or stone-tipped lances, great raw-hide shields, and 'Crusader' swords,

without points, used exclusively for cutting and slashing. A few of them possessed firearms of a type that must have been out of date by the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The greatest insult that can be offered to a Tuareg is to call him an Arab. They *hate* the Arabs, with whom they have nothing in common. Manners, speech, customs, and dress are different. The Tuareg is one of the world's finest and greatest fighters. With these primitive weapons he has held the Arab at bay for centuries and given the French garrison more than one severe mauling.

I have never seen finer men. One needs to treat them with the greatest tact and circumspection. They are haughty beyond description, and rarely condescend to come into town except for some great market or festival. They ride magnificent camels with superb grace, and if one of them does deign to look at you it is with a glance in which fearless hostility and pitiless contempt are struggling for mastery. Even the poorest of them is as proud and touchy as a feudal Prince. Although they can be both friendly and hospitable to a European they have come to know and to trust, it is wiser to avoid them. A well-meant greeting from a white man is quite likely to be regarded as insolence from an inferior, and treated accordingly. And they are swift to strike.

Although Timbuctoo is still regarded as almost mythical by many people, it was intimately connected with many of the great explorers during the latter part of the nineteenth century. That the world in general continued in ignorance of its size, appearance, and importance may be because several of the explorers failed to return home. That they should have visited Timbuctoo is natural, because in those days the course and the source of the Niger were unknown.

The first of the modern explorers to reach the town was Major Alexander Gordon Laing, who made an extremely dangerous journey across the Western Sahara in 1825-26, travelling through territory which is infested, even today, by bands of marauding fanatics. However, he accomplished the journey there without disaster and lived in Timbuctoo for about six weeks. Then he set out on the return journey, following the same route, and was murdered in the desert about forty miles north of the city. Major Laing's diary and papers have never been recovered, although

many of his personal belongings have (I am told) been found in Tuareg villages all over the Sahara.

The next European of note to arrive in Timbuctoo was the Frenchman, René Caillé. He travelled from Konakry, in what is now French Guinea, to Fez in 1829-30. Twenty-odd years later the great German explorer, Heinrich Barth, reached Timbuctoo from the east, having completed a fantastic journey from Tripoli to Kano before taking a boat along the Niger. Barth spoke fluent Arabic, and lived for some considerable time in the town disguised as an Arab under the name of Abdulla bou Kerim. (I met an old man in Timbuctoo who said he could remember him.) To impersonate an Arab and attend the Mosque in that hotbed of fanaticism must have demanded superlative courage and resource. Considering that he was a German, some of Barth's reminiscences are masterpieces of understatement and descriptive writing. But I agree with all that he—and the Major I met in Paris—had to say about Timbuctoo. It was beautiful; and I loved it.

## NOTES ON AUTHORS

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- KENNETH ADAMS, journalist and radio script writer, is now Director of Public Relations at the BBC.
- NORMAN ANGELL has written and lectured widely on political subjects. He won the Nobel Peace Prize for 1933. Among his best known books are *For What Do We Fight*, *America's Dilemma*, *The Great Illusion*, the latter appearing in 18 countries.
- ANTHONY ASQUITH is a film director. Among the many films he has directed are such notable ones as *Underground*, *A College on Dartmoor*, *Dance Pretty Lady*, *Moscow Nights*, *Pygmalion*, *French Without Tears*, *We Dive at Dawn*.
- MICHAEL AYRTON is a painter, theatre designer and art critic. He designed sets for recent productions of *Macbeth*, *Le Festin de l'Araignée*, a ballet, and the masque *Fairy Queen*. He has exhibited in Europe and America and is a member of the BBC Brains Trust.
- C. P. BLACKER is the Hon. Sec. of the Eugenics Society. He has written many works on the sociological aspects of eugenics, among them the following: *The Chances of Morbid Inheritance*, *Voluntary Sterilization*, *Birth Control and the State*.
- H. N. BRAILSFORD was leader-writer successively for the *Manchester Guardian*, *Tribune*, *Daily News* and *Nation*. He was Editor of *The New Leader* for five years. Among his books are *Rebel India* and *Subject India*.
- ARTHUR C. CLARKE is a member of the Council of the British Interplanetary Society and one of its most active members. At present he is engaged in studying Nuclear Physics at Kings College, London.
- ALEX COMFORT, author and critic, is associated with the anarchist and pacifist movements and with literary romanticism in poetry. He has written poems, novels, essays and plays. Among them are: *The Signal to Engage* (poems); *The Powerhouse* (novel); *The Besieged* (play); *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom* (essay).
- CYRIL CONNOLLY is author, critic and eminent Editor of *Horizon*. Some of his best known essays and ideas are found in *The Condemned Playground* and the subjective *The Unquiet Grave*.
- R. J. CRUIKSHANK is a director of the Daily News, Ltd., the company controlling the two London Liberal newspapers, the *News-Chronicle*

and the *Star*. During the war he was the Director of the American Division of the British Ministry of Information.

E. MAXWELL FRY, architect and town planner, at one time worked with Professor Walter Gropius. His work includes schools—notably the Village College at Impington for the Cambridge County Council—and domestic and industrial work. He is the author of *Fine Buildings* and *Architecture for Children*.

DONALD GRAHAM has vast experiences of the African desert and the Middle East. Initially he joined the Bank of England, but soon enlisted in the French Foreign Legion. He travelled widely and served during the war as Captain in the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

ROBERT GRAVES, author and traveller, has been Professor of English Literature at the Egyptain University. Among his best known writings are *Goodbye to All That* and the two Roman studies *I, Cladius* and *Cladius the God*.

R. F. HARROD is a Lecturer in Economics in the University of Oxford and Editor of *The Economic Journal*. He stood as a Liberal Candidate in the last elections.

RENÉE HAYNES, the author of several travel and other works, including *Pan, God and Caesar*, is at present working for the British Council.

SPIKE HUGHES is a music critic, broadcaster and radio producer. His radio programmes are eagerly listened to, whether his subject is modern or classical music. He has published an account of his early experiences in *Opening Bars* and is shortly to produce another book of critical analysis, *Nights at the Opera*, jointly with his radio-critic wife Barbara McFadyean.

JULIAN S. HUXLEY, biologist and writer, has recently been appointed Director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He was formerly Secretary of the Zoological Society of London. Among his better known works are *On Living in a Revolution*, *Adventures in Planning*, *Evolutionary Ethics*. With the late H. G. Wells and G. P. Wells, he is the co-author of *The Science of Life*, one of the basic books of our time.

LAWRENCE HYDE has written on metaphysical, humanistic and ethical subjects. Among his works are *The Learned Knife* and *Prospects of Humanism*.

HAROLD JENKINS is at present Lecturer in English Literature at University College, London, and was formerly a Lecturer in English at the University of the Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

ROBERT KEE spent six years in the RAF, three of them as a prisoner of war in Germany. He is a 1946 winner of the Atlantic Award. His first book is to be published this year.

DALLAS KENMARE has published a number of volumes of poems and essays. She has been described as the leading English woman poet of our generation and a feminine Whitman.

MICHAEL GARETH LLEWELYN is the pen name of Major Frederic Evans. He has over twenty five years' experience of British local government as a teacher, an inspector of schools and a director of Education. He served throughout the two wars as a hygiene specialist with the Royal Army Medical Corps. A writer of geographical and historical textbooks, he has also had published several novels, among them *Angharad's Isle* and *The Aleppo Merchant*. His new novel, *White Wheat*, is to be published this year.

SIR BEN LOCKSPEISER was recently appointed chief scientist to the Ministry of Supply and is responsible for co-ordinating research work on the Ministry's military and aeronautical programmes. Before the war he prepared Britain's balloon barrage defences.

GILBERT MCALLISTER is a Member of Parliament for Rutherglen and was formerly the Editor of *Town and Country Planning*.

J. McLAREN-ROSS was educated in Paris and the South of France. When he came to England he was on the dole (relief). He sold vacuum cleaners and adapted plays for broadcasting. During the war he spent three and one-half years as a private in the British Army. After discharge he wrote film scripts, but is now devoting his full time to writing. His publications include three volumes of short stories and two short novels. A long novel is to be published this spring. His short stories have appeared in nearly every British periodical and in several American ones.

J. MACKAY-MURE was formerly the Associate Editor of *The Times Educational Supplement*. He is now Educational Editor of the Turnstile Press and Editor of *Further Education*.

KINGSLEY MARTIN has edited *The New Statesman and Nation* since 1931. He has published several books including *French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, *The Magic of Monarchy* and *Propaganda's Harvest*.

CUTHBERT MAUGHAN is a writer on maritime subjects and has contributed widely to many well-known journals.

EDWIN MUIR, journalist, critic, author and poet, has had many works published. Among them are: *The Marionette*, *Poor Tom* (fiction); *Journeys and Places*, *The Narrow Place* (poetry); *Scott and Scotland*, *John Knox*, *Scottish Journey* (criticism).

HAROLD NICOLSON, historian, biographer and essayist, was formerly in the diplomatic service. His intimate knowledge of international affairs goes back to the Versailles Conference, which he attended in an official

capacity. He was present at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference as a commentator for the BBC. Many of his books deal with literary personalities such as Verlaine, Tennyson, Byron, etc.

GEORGE ORWELL, author and critic, is book reviewer for the *Observer* and political and literary commentator for the *Tribune*. One of his recent books is the political satire *Animal Farm*.

STEPHEN POTTER, Lecturer in English Literature at the University of London, is now occupied as a BBC producer. His publications include *The Young Man* and *The Muse in Chains*.

J. B. PRIESTLEY is author, playwright and broadcaster. Among his best known publications and plays are *The Good Companions*, *Angel Pavement*, *Laburnum Grove*, *Time and the Conways*, *Johnson Over Jordan* and *Desert Highway*.

HERBERT READ, author, essayist and poet, is a Director of Routledge & Sons, Ltd., Publishers. Among his many publications are *The Defence of Shelley* and *The Knapsack* (an anthology).

HENRY REED served in the Army and the Foreign Office during the war. He is the author of *A Map of Verona* (poems) and a radio version of *Moby Dick*. He is now occupied on a work relating to Thomas Hardy.

D. S. SAVAGE is poet and critic. He has contributed to many British and American periodicals. His works include *A Time to Mourn* (poems) and *The Personal Principle*. He was one of the recipients of the Atlantic Awards for Literature.

BERNARD SHAW needs no notes.

STEPHEN SPENDER, poet and critic, was one of the co-editors of *Horizon*. His publications include: *Poems of Dedication*, *Poems*, *The Burning Cactus*, *The Still Centre*, *The Creative Element*, *Rejoice in the Abyss*, *European Witness*.

W. L. SUMNER is the Acting Head of the Department of Education, University College, Nottingham, and member and fellow of various learned and technical societies in England.

W. W. TARN has written widely on classical subjects. Among his more recent works are *Hellenistic Civilization* and *The Greeks in Bactria and India*.

G. M. TREVELYAN, England's leading historian, was Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge and in 1940 became Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. His best known books are *History of England* and *English Social History*.

BRIAN VESEY-FITZGERALD, naturalist, writer and broadcaster, is Editor of *The Field*. Among his publications are numbered: *Badger's Funeral*, *A Book of British Waders*, *Farming in Britain*, *Gypsies of Britain*,

*British Game*. He is now engaged in editing a series of books on English counties.

MERVYN WALL is an Irish writer, at present a civil servant in Ireland. He has written several plays, one of which was produced by the Abbey Theatre.

STEPHEN WILLIAMS is a BBC broadcaster on literary matters and dramatic critic of the London *Evening News*.

*No authoritative notes were available at press time for John Russell.*